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FEEBLE-MINDED CITIZENS  
IN PENNSYLVANIA

BY  
DR. WILHELMINE E. KEY



# FEEBLE-MINDED CITIZENS IN PENNSYLVANIA

BEING  
THE REPORT OF A SURVEY OF A CERTAIN  
LOCALITY COMPRISING ABOUT 700 SQUARE  
MILES AND HAVING A POPULATION  
ESTIMATED AT 16,000

MADE BY  
DR. WILHELMINE E. KEY

DURING  
THE FOUR MONTHS FROM AUGUST 7  
TO DECEMBER 6, 1914

FOR  
THE PUBLIC CHARITIES ASSOCIATION  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

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## Foreword

THE following survey, made by Dr. Wilhelmine E. Key, of Polk, Pennsylvania, for the Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania, was made possible by the generosity of Mrs. Edward T. Stotesbury of Philadelphia, to whom not only the Association but the State owes a debt of gratitude.

The State of Pennsylvania is caring for about four thousand feeble-minded. It supports two institutions for this class of dependents and is in process of constructing a new one to be used exclusively for feeble-minded women of child-bearing age. It also pays a private institution for the feeble-minded to care for quite a number of such persons for whom the State has no accommodation.

The waiting list of the three existing institutions is apparently from eight hundred to one thousand.

A recent investigation of the hospitals and asylums caring for the dependent insane in Pennsylvania, including the County almshouses having insane patients, indicates that, collectively, they are caring for at least five or six hundred feeble-minded.

Although reliable statistics are not available as to the number of mental defectives in the various penal and correctional institutions of the State, in view of the fact that the combined census of these institutions exceeds ten thousand, the experience of other communities would make it almost certain that the number of feeble-minded confined in such places is considerable.

The same thing is probably true of the various homes and asylums for dependent children.

Experts who have made a special study of the incidence of feeble-mindedness tell us that the number of people of this character at large in the community and, therefore, not included in any of the classes above described, far exceeds those receiving any sort of custodial care. It has been difficult, however, to secure data on this subject, so far as Pennsylvania is concerned, and the Public Charities Association of Pennsylvania has, therefore,

thought it worth while to have a survey made of a definite portion of the State by one who has had special experience in this kind of work, with a view to obtaining at least an approximate idea of the relative number of feeble-minded in the locality studied, their cost to the community, and such other facts as might prove of value to the State Legislature and others interested in doing what seems best and feasible for this class of our population.

To determine accurately the number of mentally defective persons in even a small group of population is a task which presents enormous difficulties. It involves a personal mental examination of each individual in such a group, a careful study of the family history and the social adaptability of each and, not infrequently, a re-examination or a short period of observation. It is only by such means as these that it can be ascertained whether a person is mentally defective or not. It is obvious that to perform such a task in an entire settlement would require the services of a number of well-trained medical examiners, a considerable expenditure of time and a degree of co-operation almost impossible to obtain in an American community. Health officers, even clothed with the police power which the law delegates to them for the welfare of the community at large, would experience great and perhaps unsurmountable difficulties in making a physical examination of each person to determine the incidence of tuberculosis, for instance, in the district in which Dr. Key made this study.

Dr. Key was obliged, therefore, after recording those persons whose mental defect was obvious without a personal examination, to identify the mentally defective by a study of the actual results of their contact with their environment as shown in police records, history of dependence and current popular opinion as to their conduct; by their school records and by the family ties which bound them to those whose mental defect was so obvious as to admit of no doubt.

The results of such a study have much value but, in interpreting these results, it is essential to bear constantly in mind a very important qualifying factor—the influence upon normal children and even adults of the type of environment, moral training and social reputation which characterize the homes of the mentally defective. The influence of a feeble-minded mother, whose mental defect is not necessarily of a type which can be transmitted

to her children, would profoundly affect the character of the children who are reared in that home. Their conduct would often be indistinguishable from that of the mentally defective.

This factor has undoubtedly influenced the enumeration which Dr. Key has made and it is necessary to bear in mind that in this report she has used the term "feeble-minded person" as meaning an individual whose defect was so obvious that no mental examination was necessary to detect it or one who is a member of the family of such a person and whose social reactions are such as to make him indistinguishable from a mentally defective person without a personal examination.

That the mentally defective, uncared-for and unrecognized in a community, can so distort the influence of the home as to produce a human type indistinguishable from themselves except by a careful mental examination is a fact of profound social significance.

No one can read the report submitted without a realization of the seriousness of the problem considered, the immense importance of immediate steps toward meeting it more adequately than is being done at the present time, and the conviction that the segregation and care of these unfortunate persons is the greatest step toward the prevention of a vast number of social evils which can be taken by the people of this State.

The burden of feeble-mindedness can apparently be lessened only by prompt steps toward the elimination of at least the worst strains in each community. It is imperative, therefore, that the State of Pennsylvania complete its Village for Feeble-minded Women at once, and also, at the earliest possible date, provide still further accommodations for the segregation, care and training of its rapidly increasing feeble-minded population.

CHARLES H. FRAZIER, M.D.,  
*President*  
*The Public Charities Association*  
*of Pennsylvania.*

*April 5, 1915*

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## Introduction

RECENT years have marked a great extension of interest in the occurrence of mental defect. The recognition of such defect as a factor in most social ills and the proofs of its strongly hereditary nature are leading to a broader view and a more far-reaching policy among all progressive workers for social betterment.

We now see how inevitably the victims of an unfortunate heredity drift into poverty and crime, and we seek to provide for them in our great institutions a special environment where, in place of these dire results, they may have happy and relatively useful lives. But our policy of prevention involves a further and far more valuable result. It is destined to prevent the occurrence of mental defect in society at large. Since these defectives too often represent degenerate lines of the human family, their failure to procreate means the elimination of these lines and gives promise of greatly simplifying the manifold problems which they have occasioned. Accordingly, we are stressing more and more the custodial aspect of these institutions and inquiring how far their number and capacity should be increased.

That the effective handling of our social problems demands such an increase is generally accepted, but the question of the number of defectives at large and needing institutional care is at present largely a matter of conjecture. Heretofore all estimates of the number of such defectives have been reached by the application of a fixed ratio to the number of inhabitants. This was done on the assumption that the proportion of defectives to normals is relatively uniform, whereas it may well be far from uniform. Is it not reasonable to expect that a State like Pennsylvania, whose resources are so varied and whose population has been so diversely derived, should present in various sections not only great extremes of social worth, but wide differences in inherent ability? Indeed, pedigree studies of institutional cases have

already verified this idea. They have shown the majority of these cases to be single units in a vast ramification which stands for nearly every form of social inadequacy. More than once they have called attention to whole communities infected with degeneracy and defect.

It is to the existence of such centers of degeneracy and defect and the conditions they present that attention should be especially directed, as the quickest and most effective means of carrying out the present policy of prevention and elimination.

The present study is an attempt to state the situation for a small portion of Pennsylvania. Are there such centers in this State? What kinds of defectives are found there? How do their proportions vary in different parts of the area of study? What causes can be assigned for this variation? What is necessary to the cure of the conditions found? The answers which this study furnishes to these questions suggest—

1. The importance of further attempts at gaining a proper perspective for the whole State, that is, locating its bad spots.
2. The necessity for definite information about the tainted stocks whose unrestrained reproduction gives rise to these bad spots.
3. The wisdom of immediate and adequate provision for the institutional care of the offshoots of such stocks.

## Preliminary Survey

IN undertaking to answer the first question: Are there areas which, by common consent, are regarded as centers of degeneracy and defect, a preliminary survey was made in the northeastern portion of the State. The area comprised the ten northeastern counties. County officials, social workers, and representative citizens were interviewed, particularly in the cities and at the several county-seats. Criminal and charity records were consulted for confirmation of the reports given, and the accounts further verified by personal visitation to the sections in question.

By this means at least half a dozen such areas were defined for this part of the State. These differ, of course, in extent and character and the gravity of the problems they present. In some there is great sexual laxity, which leads to various forms of dependency and sometimes to extreme mental defect. In others alcoholism prevails and the people show a propensity for deeds of violence. All informants, however, practically agreed to the following characterization:

1. Because of the thefts and depredations and the frequent applications for charitable relief from such sections they constitute a parasitic growth which saps the resources of the self-respecting, self-sustaining contingent of the population.
2. They furnish an undue proportion of court cases and are thus a serious expense to county and State.
3. They are a source of physical decay and moral contamination, and thus menace the integrity of the entire social fabric.

The evidence for the existence of these areas casts further doubt on the supposition that there is any uniformity in the distribution of the socially unfit. At the same time their use as starting-points for further investigation and the application of remedial measures may save much time and effort in clearing up the situation for the whole State.

## Intensive Studies

THE next step in the investigation was the intensive study of a restricted area in the same part of the State. This had for its object the answer to the other questions suggested in the introduction. These are here repeated in a more explicit form:

1. What types of defective are found in this section, as judged by their social reactions?
2. What is the mental status of these defectives?
3. What variations do their number bear to the number of normal individuals in various portions of the area?
4. What factors are chiefly accountable for their occurrence and distribution?
5. What have they cost society?
6. What measures are suggested for their care and for the prevention of further spread of the evils they engender?

**The area for intensive study** roughly defines a square, with its four angles directed toward the cardinal points, and is cut in two by the winding valley of a large stream, which here has a general southeasterly course. It comprises about 700 square miles, thus approximating Chester County in extent, and has a population estimated at 16,000.

This area was selected primarily for the uniform physical and industrial conditions and the wide diversity in population which it presents. In the north and east it is a region of high hill country, drained by a number of creeks which here have carved out broad, meandering valleys. Toward its southwestern boundary it grows wilder and more mountainous and is cut by narrow, deep cañons. Here the surface is still covered by ancient forests, which mark the limit of human habitation. Throughout the

rest of its extent, however, patience and industry have developed good farms from the rather unpromising soil.

Accordingly, the region is distinctly rural in character and has only one village of more than 500 inhabitants. Its population has been derived chiefly from early pioneers from New England and New York, and a later infusion of Irish and Welsh blood. It has remained untouched by the stream of recent immigration, the influences of a large city, and the disturbances incident to the growth of great industries. Its people are in the main sturdy, self-respecting, progressive. They have sent out a good many pioneers to the West and professional men and women to our great cities. They support schools and churches, employ modern methods on their farms, and take an intelligent interest in questions of the day.

Scattered among them, but remaining relatively distinct from them, since they seldom intermarry with them and remain untouched by their standards and ideals, is another element. This, too, has been derived from the pioneer stock of more than a century ago. It is characterized by gross ignorance and various forms of social inadequacy.

In the following account these classes have been grouped according to the type of offense of which they are prevailingly guilty. An analysis was attempted whereby conclusions could be reached concerning their mental status. While this method of social diagnosis has its faults and limitations, it is felt by the writer to have given in this instance more reliable results than would have been the case in many other sections. In a section where there is little sharp competition, where a degree of native wit coupled with industry secures a good livelihood, and where school and church influences and general neighborliness make possible community of ideas as to standards of conduct, the social reactions of the individual furnish safer grounds for induction than in a more complex society.

**The Gathering of the Data.**—This was accomplished by much house-to-house visiting, which did not mean a hurried five minutes on the door-step, but more often a stay of an hour or repeated calls. In this way the whole family was usually seen and initial impressions were gathered concerning the ability of the members. This done, a system of cross-reference followed, which eliminated wrong statements from other sources. Verification by county



records of crime and relief was also resorted to. A careful study was made of local efforts toward the improvement of individual cases or families. In the case of children the grade reached in school was ascertained, the school history gone over, and the particular problems which they presented considered. Medical inspection being general in these schools, made possible the elimination of those in whom retardation and delinquency were chiefly attributable to physical causes. Unless unmistakably defective, children under six years were not included in the census.

## TYPES OF DEFECTIVES

**The Partially Dependent.**—Nearly every section has its quota of the shifting and the ne'er-do-well, but this area appears to have an unusually large number belonging to this class. They have few vices: they do not figure largely in the criminal docket. Still, existing as they do on the ragged edge of destitution, any untoward circumstance sends them under and they become candidates for outdoor relief or subsist by the charity of their abler, hard-working neighbors. Often, too, their petty thefts and depredations are a factor in the way in which they continually move on. When asked where they have lived, they usually reply—"Oh! all over," and to the question, "What kinds of work can you do?" the invariable answer is, "Oh! just anything we can get to do." A few of the better class sometimes try to pay for an acre or two of stony land, and you listen to their tale of futile struggle before "So and so" agreed to take it back. Sometimes they stay for a year as tenants on a farm, but usually investigation shows that their appeals for work come when the work is all finished. It is a significant fact that such a family, once located, shows much the same character in all its branches.

On entering their homes the writer more than once found herself on the point of saying, "Don't let me interrupt your sweeping." The accumulations of rags, shavings, corn-husks, potato parings, and similar litter near the door made it hard to believe that they had not been swept there from the rest of the house, but when a further glance revealed no sign of a broom in operation, and the rest of the floor in similar condition, the remark was naturally suppressed. Then everything which normally belongs on hooks or shelves is strewn on chairs and floor. The

table is crowded with tin boxes and dishes which see service without washing for days together. The rusty stove is covered with grease and unwashed utensils. Even in summer, with the doors and windows open, the atmosphere is overpowering, since odors of stale food and every imaginable kind of human filth vie with one another for preëminence.

The head of the family in such cases is usually found to be lazy and ambitionless, or having fair industry, this is coupled with inability to plan or calculate on the probable return from his labor. His wife too often proves to be no manager, and when both are defective, the situation is sorry indeed. Both have usually worked out before marriage on farms and in households where system and neatness were the order of the day, but, left to themselves, they show no trace of the training thus received. In other words, they belong to the high-grade feeble-minded, whom example and constant assistance cannot lift to useful, independent lives.

The children in such families nearly always prove to be lag-gards at school, in many cases markedly defective. The visitor frequently found the whole family kept at home on the slightest pretext—fretful baby, the family washing, mother's back ached. But more often the limited supply of shoes and other garments made it impossible for the whole family to be completely clothed and in school on the same day, so that even an average child has small chance of keeping up with his fellows.

As an example of this type, we may take the L. family. The three generations studied all show the same drifting, irresponsible tendency. No one can say they are positively bad or serious disturbers of the communities where they may have a temporary home. Certain members are epileptic and defective to the point of imbecility. The father of this family drank and provided little for their support. The mother, though hard working, was never able to care for them properly. So they and their 12 children were frequent recipients of public relief, a habit which they have consistently kept up. Ten of the children grew to maturity, and all but one married and had in their turn large families. With two exceptions these have lived in the territory studied. Nobody knows how they have subsisted, even with the generous help they have received. They drift in and out of the various settlements, taking care to keep their residence in the county

which has provided most liberally for their support. In some villages it is said they have been in and out half a dozen times in the last few years. First one family comes slipping back, then one by one the others trail in as long as there are cheap shelters to be had. Then rents fall due, neighbors become suspicious of invaded hen-roosts and potato patches, and one after another the families take their departure, only to reappear after a year or two.

The seven children of the eldest son were scattered years ago through the death of their father. They were taken by strangers, and though kept in school, none of them proved capable of advancement. Three at least could not learn to read or handle the smallest quantities. The rest do this with difficulty. All but two are now married and founding the fourth generation of this line. The family of the fourth son are now county charges. Of the 14 children of school age in this and the remaining families, all are greatly retarded. One is an epileptic and at sixteen cannot read and write. One at fifteen is in the third reader and should be set down as defective. The remainder are from one to four years retarded.

There is nothing striking in the annals of this family. It comes as near the lowest margin of human existence as possible and illustrates how marked defect may sometimes exist without serious results in the infringement of law and custom. Its serious menace, however, lies in the certain marriage into stocks which are no better, and the production of large families which continue to exist on the same level of semi-dependency. In place of the two dependents of a generation ago we now find in the third generation 32 descendants who bid fair to continue their existence on the same plane—certainly an enormous multiplication of the initial burden of expense.

**The Intemperate.**—In a large number of families the defectiveness is associated with the vice of intemperance. The sentiment in favor of abstinence is making its way very slowly in this part of the State. Every little country hotel has its bar, and the amount of drunkenness that is witnessed on fair or circus days, even in men of otherwise good standing, is revolting. The Saturday-night drinking, after the day's marketing, would be a scandal in many other communities. When the heavy drinking is conjoined with mental defect, which entails low earning power,



the conditions presented are most lamentable. In many of the histories given under other heads, alcoholism is also a serious factor. We subjoin a few of the many cases where intemperance and mental deficiency on the part of one or both parents may be said to constitute the chief factor in the unhappy situation:

Charles N.:\* A man in early middle life. Has never worked steadily at anything, but after his marriage occasionally rented a small piece of ground and made some pretext of supporting a rapidly increasing family. His wife, who belonged to degenerate stock, is said to have been unfaithful to him, quarreled with him constantly, and has left him several times, but always returned. Her conduct was made an excuse for greater excesses and abuse on his part, and last spring, after a prolonged debauch and frightful quarreling, they broke up permanently. The mother is said to have made way with the youngest child, a babe a few weeks old. The six older children are now scattered, since neither parent would assume any responsibility for their care. The two eldest are staying with their father's sister. They appear to be defective. The third has gone to her grandmother, while the younger ones are being boarded in a temporary home at the expense of the county.

Ephraim B.: An ignorant, middle-aged ne'er-do-well, who makes his neuralgia and other physical ailments an excuse for working as little as possible. Drinks to excess whenever he has any money. Comes from a family which for generations has wandered in and out of various communities, settling to little that is useful. His brothers have been county charges and in court for various offenses. His father, vicious, violent, is in custody now on a charge of attempting to shoot up the whole family. Ephraim is married to a woman who knows nothing of her antecedents, since she was a waif and brought up by strangers. She is very ignorant, nervous, and flighty. Neighbors constantly help with food and clothing, but she has little ability to turn to good account what is given her. They move from one poor shack to another, parasitizing themselves in turn on one community after another. Their three children appear wide awake, but are insufficiently fed and clothed and are not sent to school with any regularity.

\*All names are, of course, fictitious.

William V.: The son of a simple-minded father who occasionally drank to excess and a hard, bad-tempered, cruel mother. He lived in most squalid circumstances and was brought up to no regular work. Married an immigrant Irish girl who, too, acquired the habit of drinking. They now live in a little cabin up a lonesome mountain road. They do nothing but quarrel, and drink when the small returns from the farm yield anything above the barest subsistence. Of their four children, the son is good for nothing, a drunkard and criminal, and living with the wife of another man. The eldest daughter has had three children, all born out of wedlock and each by a different father. The second is home at present suffering from venereal disease; has been leading an immoral life in the city. The third disappeared last May after a violent quarrel with her father over two dollars. She wished the money to purchase seed wheat, and her father wanted it for a spree. She was the only one who made any attempt to cultivate the farm.

Albert G.: A man of thirty-five who works only fitfully and then squanders the money in drink. His wife drinks with him, and helps out in the matter of providing the necessary money by the business of prostitution. They live in a poor little two-roomed house and have three little boys who have nearly died from neglect and starvation. Neighbors continually give food and clothing, but little is done by either parent for the maintenance of the family. When clothing is received, it is put on whether suitable or not, rarely washed, and usually worn until it falls off in rags. This man has recently announced his intention of getting work in another part of the country, but all agree that both father and mother are beyond the possibility of reform and should have permanent care where there will be no more children.

**The Sexually Immoral.**—There is very general sexual laxness in certain portions of this area. Not only are there many sexually immoral women who disseminate disease, but the investigator found many couples who were living together out of wedlock, and many men who have not been married but who take up with one worthless woman after another. When children come from these temporary unions, the woman usually goes to

the County Home and the child becomes a burden on the public. The following histories are illustrative of these conditions:

Blink M.: A very dark, heavy, brutal-looking man. Works with fair steadiness and is a useful farm hand, living alone in a two-roomed house furnished by his employer. He is unspeakably gross in his drinking and sex practices, but as a rule confines his orgies to Sundays and holidays. Every pay night he brings home an extra supply of liquor and two or three women who stay with him until the drink and his money are gone.

Ned S.: A rough, violent mulatto, one of 17 children, who owns many acres of stony land, which he makes little effort to improve, preferring rather to pick berries and hunt for a bare livelihood. Is a heavy drinker and has a court record for false pretense, criminal assault, and theft. His wife was respectable and hard-working and had some success in keeping their sons to a decent manner of life. Since her death all three have consorted with the worst characters in the countryside. When visited last summer the small house, which stands back from an unfrequented road, was harboring the following inmates: Ned and his two grown sons, a young woman who had been picked up temporarily by one of the sons while huckleberrying on the mountain, a woman of bad repute living apart from her husband, her ten-year-old daughter, and a widow of notorious character who since her husband's death has gone from place to place, staying as long as any money could be gotten from the men of the family. She had her three young children with her, one of whom, a girl of fifteen, is said to be pregnant by one of Ned's sons.

The Mells: This couple have lived together as man and wife, although it is generally known that Mrs. Mell had a husband elsewhere from whom she had never been divorced. They are bringing up six children, including a son by Mrs. Mell's husband. The paternity of several of the remaining five is somewhat in doubt, but Mr. Mell views his consort's derelictions jocularly. He dandles his latest born on his knee saying, "I don't know who your daddy is, but I love you just the same."

Mrs. R.: A very pretty, attractive, plausible woman, who

comes from a sexually loose strain. Her husband belongs to a line showing marked defect. He earns very low wages and spends a good portion of them for tobacco, drink, and cheap amusements. The family is often in want, and to offset this Mrs. R. has taken in sewing and lately has been encouraging the visits of other men. The home has become the scene of violent quarrels, and the six children, all as pretty as their mother, but dirty and disheveled beyond description, are being corrupted by the shameful scenes and the knowledge of their mother's mode of life.

Obadiah V.: A lazy, ineffective man, who though physically capable, has never made any attempt to maintain his wife and children. Belongs to a family notorious for their lazy, ambitionless lives. His wife was weak and ailing and lost four or five of her children in infancy, finally dying in child-birth. The family has moved from one mountain hut to another, the children being sent out to beg, and neighboring farms contributing hams, vegetables, etc., usually without the owner's consent. Only one of the four children who grew up was capable of normal advancement at school. They have finally taken refuge in a little shanty, resembling a hen-roost, which they built with their own hands in an out-of-the-way cranny of the hills. The eldest daughter is now married. The son has bought off his father's claim on him for \$100, thus showing evidence of independence. Though badly crippled, he works by the month for farmers. The second daughter is capable of doing housework, but is very violent tempered and abuses her little sister shamefully. The latter is thirteen years old, but very timid, simple, and childish. Has never gotten beyond the first grade. Her tales to the neighbors of the relations between her father and her sister have brought upon her the most cruel treatment. She is sent on errands barefooted through the snow. She frequently sleeps in the barn or runs to some friendly family, asking to be taken in for the night. She is so filthy and covered with vermin that it takes an evening's work to make her fit for a decent bed.

Allie B.: Is a pretty, pink-cheeked, bright-eyed blonde of twenty-five, who knows no better than to talk openly of her goings-on with any neighbor who will listen to her. She was the child of an illicit relation between two equally immoral, irrespons-



ible people. Her mother took no care of her, and for years has continued her life of shame in another State. Her father early devoted his daughter to immoral purposes, and when she was twelve years old married her to an old man. Not being equal to the task of caring for her, he was finally taken with her to the almshouse. Here she was placed out in various families, but since she could do only the simplest tasks, she was never retained long. As a rule, she worked for 50 cents a week and failed to earn even that. One woman who was sorry for her kept particular watch over her for more than a year, and that is the only period in the girl's life when she has been guiltless of sex offense. Later she married a young man who works irregularly and goes on frequent sprees. It is the favorite diversion of all the young men of loose character in the neighborhood to gather, sometimes to the number of a dozen or more, and after getting the husband dead drunk, make their cabin the scene of unspeakable and outrageous practices. Any weak young man of the better families in the community who can be drawn into the crowd and persuaded to drink with them is pretty certain to be taken to this cabin, and since Allie is badly diseased, the consequences are correspondingly serious.

**The Criminalistic.**—The mental defect of many of those studied expresses itself in crime. The long list of offenses includes among others larceny, receiving stolen goods, assault and battery, rape, breaking prison, and keeping a disorderly house. Six murders have also been committed here in the past dozen years. Of the lesser crimes, larceny is the most common. The prosperous members of the community expect to be victimized by the less competent. So general is the expectation that certain families will steal that question as to their honesty invariably evokes the answer, "Find me one of that family who doesn't lie and steal." The number of persons who impose in this fashion on their abler neighbors is considerable, and while there is no means of calculating the cost, it should further weight our arguments for giving this class institutional care.

Silas F.: A heavy, awkward man with foolish, grinning face and silly manner. Belongs to a very defective strain. Though barely above the grade of imbecile, he is able to earn a fair wage

at the roughest farm work. Is a heavy drinker, however, and spends all his earnings for whisky. He keeps his family supplied with vegetables, eggs, and chickens from his neighbors' gardens and hen-roosts. Has been caught repeatedly and punished, but this works no reform. The past summer has been associated with Wesley A. and nine others in systematic plundering of a neighboring farm. He is also very cruel and abusive to his imbecile wife, and with her was guilty of gross neglect of their only child, who died from want and exposure to the cold.

Wesley A.: Is an example of the canting, hypocritical thief. He delights in sermonizing. Is an ardent supporter of the Salvation Army, and holds cottage prayer meetings. However, he has rarely been known to do an honest day's work if he can manage to exist otherwise. If begging or stealing fail, there is always the friendly county relief. His wife keeps a fairly neat house, but is ignorant and illiterate. His three daughters are married to men of similar stamp, and his three sons lack the merest rudiments of learning. They cannot read or write their names and do little better than their father in providing for themselves and their families.

Betsy B.: An example of the vicious, violent defective with some ability in mischief-planning. Is known as The Fire-Brand, The Fire-Cat, as she has burned several barns and three times has burned her house down. Her family ascribe these actions to her bad temper, and say that the destruction of the buildings was from spite and followed a violent quarrel. But since the buildings were flimsy structures, insured beyond their real value, and in the case of the houses the furniture upon which she was trying to collect insurance was found hidden in the hay-loft, the conclusion is natural that she wanted the insurance. She has turned her husband out-of-doors. He is decent, but stupid. She now adds to her resources by making her house a meeting-place and temporary home for couples who do not care to marry and who cannot afford a house to themselves. One of her sons inherits the same uncontrollable temper, and some years ago stabbed his brother-in-law to death with a pitchfork during a quarrel over a trifling matter.

The Tanda Family: The father and mother and most of their 12 children, all living, have been up repeatedly for various offenses, among them malicious mischief, larceny, assault and battery, and receiving stolen goods. The sons are heavy drinkers, quarrelsome, thieving. Several daughters are alcoholic, and all have had illegitimate children. One is said to be serving a penitentiary sentence at the present time. This family has drifted about, "never doing any good." For more than four years now they have lived in a flimsy little shack of three tiny rooms and an attic. This is surrounded with every conceivable form of litter, and inside would outdo a pig-sty in bestiality. Walls and every available corner are crowded with dirty, rusty, leaky utensils, broken-legged furniture, useless implements in every stage of decrepitude. Besides its human denizens, the place is overrun with dogs and chickens, and horses have been known to be stabled in the cellar. Here live the father, the mother, a married son with his feeble-minded wife and child, the three younger sons of the family, who are still unmarried. In response to the visitor's question concerning sleeping quarters, the feeble-minded young wife said, "Oh! the boys they just bunk around in their clothes anywhere," indicating several bundles of foul rags in as many corners.

Maria F.: A querulous, vindictive woman, who was never able to get on with her husband. He failed to support her and she lived with him only part of the time, taking refuge in the County Home whenever hard pressed by want or in need of a shelter for the safe delivery of her children. In this way seven children were born to this couple. Efforts were repeatedly made to place them in good families, but the mother always objected, preferring for them life in the almshouse or a half-starved existence with her. Later one of her sons married and, growing jealous of his wife, connived with his mother for her murder. For a consideration of \$3 she and another son broke into the house one night, brutally murdered her daughter-in-law and a little niece who was there, and ran to give the alarm. They then poured kerosene over the bodies and burned the house with its victims to the ground. All three sons and the mother were tried for the crime; the two sons were found guilty and hanged for it. During the time these men were in prison it was learned that they knew

nothing of the significance of the words "God" and "Christ" beyond their use in profane speech. Her husband finally committed suicide by sitting on the rails in the way of a train, and Maria is now married to her third husband. Seems a harmless, shrinking old woman, though suspicious of close questioning. Her eldest daughter was a hard-working woman who supported a tubercular husband and his brother, with whom she afterward cohabited, by washing and scrubbing. She died seven months ago of a paralytic stroke. Two other daughters are loose in their sex relations, and the sole surviving son is married to an imbecile girl belonging to the same strain. She is the daughter of an imbecile woman by her alcoholic uncle. All the surviving children of Maria have families.

**Feeble-minded Mothers.**—The tendency of the feeble-minded woman to indolence, criminality, and sexual offense is well known. Social investigation frequently discloses women who show none of these characteristics, but who nevertheless have families in which they abound. This seems to be especially true of the lower classes. In a class where a woman is not a wage-earner and where superficial culture may cloak even serious defect, a feeble-minded woman often attracts a man of strong and sterling qualities. The resulting union may produce children in whom the positive traits from the father's side make good the lack on the part of the mother. But where the well-being of the family depends largely on the ability of the mother as a producer and the conserver of her husband's scant earnings, the situation is necessarily very different. Such a woman, even though industrious and by a fortunate circumstance chaste, rarely secures a partner who is not as defective as she. The children from such unions are often far more defective than their parents, and brought up, as they are, in an adverse environment, their immoral tendencies inevitably lead to many misdemeanors.

Sarah C.: A very defective woman who can neither read nor write nor manage her household. She comes from a family which has shown incest and other forms of sexual offense, but so far as known she has led a decent life in this respect. She married at twelve years a man who drank but was very strong and industrious. He had, however, no idea of number nor the value of his services, and it is said that he often did a hard day's



work for 30 cents. In common with their kind, they have moved about a great deal, but because of their evident wish to lead honest lives, neighbors have always loaded them with gifts of food and clothing. Since Mrs. C. could not prepare a meal nor mend and adapt the garments given her, their large family was nearly always destitute. Some are markedly defective, and all have grown up ignorant, disorderly, and willing to depend on others for support. The eldest daughter has been married and working in a hotel in New York. Details of later history unknown. The eldest son died at forty of appendicitis, leaving his family dependent. The two surviving sons work for farmers and spend most of their small earnings in tobacco and drink. One of them is married. The second daughter has always been wayward and thieving. She cohabited with a widower of some respectability, but since she was objectionable to his children, the relationship was broken off by them. Lately she has consorted for various periods with any one who would take her up. The third daughter, a high-grade imbecile, married several years ago a man of bad ancestry who is working now with fair steadiness on the section. She has a little child. Is lazy, unkempt, filthy, sits all day with the child in her arms in a house where dirt and disorder and foul smell simply beggar description. The youngest daughter is an imbecile, stubborn, intractable. She has always refused to go to school, but could not have learned anything had she gone. Cannot perform the simplest tasks acceptably.

Katie F.: A very comely, pleasant-spoken young woman, who tries to keep her children and her house clean and in order. She does not know her age, but appears to be under thirty. Cannot read nor write and has not the slightest idea of number. Said her eldest child, one of seven, was probably five years old, and when asked the age of the fourth child, said she thought it might be going on six. She is married to a man of somewhat better mentality, but who makes no attempt to provide for her and the children, spending what he occasionally earns in drink. She is already the mother of seven children, the youngest being a pair of twins six weeks old. She keeps the older boys at home to care for the younger children. They are defective in sight and hearing, and are still struggling along in the first reader.

Abbie E.: A woman of about twenty-seven who does not talk plainly, has no idea of number, though she reads and writes a little. Is married to a man who has defective speech and is ill much of the time with stomach trouble. He has never been in school at all. Cannot read nor write, but has learned to handle small quantities. In spite of his disabilities he works with fair steadiness for farmers. Both are decent morally, well behaved, fond of their children, but insufficient earnings and the wife's inability to manage mean a home destitute of the barest necessities. The first child died of spasms, the second of tuberculosis, the third, a boy of nine, a weakling physically and mentally, has never been kept at school because of constant colds and incipient tuberculosis. The fourth, a girl of eight, cannot pronounce "w" and "m" nor her brother's name. The one-year old baby is bright and to all appearances strong.

Dora K.: This woman should be classed as high-grade feeble-minded. She is illiterate, lacking in good common sense. Keeps her house and family with fair neatness. Is married to a man of about the same mental grade, who works steadily at rough mechanical tasks. Supports his family in relative comfort. Five of their 11 children died before the age of four. One or two of the remaining children are deaf and said to be defective in other ways. The two-year-old son is deaf. The eldest daughter is an imbecile and deaf. Has attended the school at Scranton nine years, but has never learned to talk or read. The eldest son also deaf. Is making slightly better progress. At home both are useless, spending their time playing up and down the country roads like children of five.

Sophie D.: A very erratic, silly woman, who has never been able to tell the time of day or attend to her family's crudest needs. Came with her husband from Poland about forty years ago. He is illiterate but possessed of some native sense, and has managed to pay for a small piece of hilly land. His wife has always run the country roads, neglecting the home and children. The latter grew up ignorant, quarrelsome, immoral in various ways. The eldest son married a woman of better family, who was disowned in consequence. During her lifetime he supported her and their three children by working in the railroad shops, but

since her death they have come to relatives in this section. He spends most of his money gambling. Two other sons drink heavily, work fitfully. One had an intrigue with his sister-in-law before her death. Two daughters are married, with families now being reared in similar circumstances of squalor and moral laxity. The youngest, a girl of thirteen, has reached only the fourth grade. Is very wild and wayward, and at present said to have immoral relations with her brother-in-law.

### MISFITS IN THE RURAL SCHOOL

It is now understood that inability to fit into the school régime is often prophetic of social unfitness in later life. Accordingly, much attention has of recent years been given to the subnormal and incorrigible child in the public school.

So far, however, no census of defective children in the rural schools has been attempted. If such children constitute a problem in the city school, with its manifold appliances and varied curriculum, they must prove a sore trial to the district school teacher who is young, inexperienced, and burdened with a crowded program. The present study included inspection of practically all the schools in the territory. Where a family was known to have adult defectives, special inquiry was always made into the records of all children of school age. By far the greater number of these schools send annually to the county superintendent's office a record of age, grade reached, and character of work done for each pupil. These records were of great value as starting-points for investigation of families hitherto unknown to the investigator. The testimony of the teacher who had worked for several years in a community and who, perhaps, had gone to school with the parents or the older brothers and sisters of her pupils, served also as a valuable check on observations made at first hand. Following is the condensed account of 50 children, selected from a total of 160 pupils whose inability to advance may be laid primarily to hereditary defect. This list does not include cases of extreme defect, where the child, though of school age, has never been sent to school, nor does it include any of the merely backward and dull.

CASE I.—Girl. Fourteen years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Parents foreign born. Father stupid but fairly industrious. Mother imbecile. Both very

quarrelsome. Brothers sexually loose, alcoholic. Home neglected in every particular.

School Record.—Irregular attendance. Backward in all subjects. No interest.

Characteristics.—No physical stigmata. Lively, but silly, shallow, running after men.

CASE 2.—Girl. Fourteen years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—The daughter of the eldest brother of Case 1, who works in shops but gambles and keeps low company. Mother from a better family, which, however, shows dullness, lack of ambition. Home until last spring with parents, who sent her to city school. Since the mother's death has lived with an aunt, who though poor takes a great interest in her.

School Record.—Attendance regular. Reads in the second reader, but with no expression. Handles only the smallest quantities. Unable to master addition tables.

Characteristics.—Fully developed physically. Neat, pretty, docile, tries. Seems almost without memory or reasoning power. Poor memory extends to events in her own experience as well as to school work.

CASE 3.—Boy. Twelve years. First grade.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of Case 2. Home at present with quarrelsome, defective grandparents. Poor food. Almost no clothing.

School Record.—Until this year has attended city school. Does only first-grade work with difficulty.

Characteristics.—Generally defective. Attention wanders. Almost no memory.

CASE 4.—Boy. Nine years. Primary grade.

Personal and Family History.—Brother of Cases 2 and 3. At present with his quarrelsome, defective grandparents.

School Record.—In school two years and has not yet mastered the smallest words and quantities.

Characteristics.—Undersized. Blind in one eye. Poor attention and memory.

CASE 5.—Girl. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Vagrant, irresponsible stock. Many epileptic and feeble-minded. Fatherless, neglected by mother. Home at present with a sister-in-law, who is a neat housekeeper and anxious to help her.

School Record.—Attendance regular. Reads a little. Handles small quantities, but has never yet been able to learn long division.

Characteristics.—Large but listless in attitude and with a dull, vacant look. Tractable. Attention and memory poor. Very little interest in school work.



CASE 6.—Girl. Seven years. Kindergarten.

Family and Personal History.—On the paternal side occasional defect. The maternal side average, self-respecting people. Father alcoholic and unfaithful. Has deserted mother, who is ill most of the time and struggling to give her children the barest necessities. The child weighed three pounds when born and developed very slowly in every particular.

School Record.—Has attended now four months. Cannot learn to distinguish colors or form, or understand much of what is said to her. Teacher feels that all her efforts thus far have been wasted.

Characteristics.—Delicate, pretty, rather uncertain in her movements. Affectionate, with occasional streaks of obstinacy. Marked speech defect.

CASE 7.—Boy. Eight years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of the foregoing. Living under same circumstances. Development from birth apparently normal. Wants proper food.

School Record.—Attendance regular. Appears interested. Reads in the second reader with fair ease, but cannot do anything with numbers.

Characteristics.—Good-looking, with a bright, alert manner. Talkative, boasting, inclined to lie and steal.

CASE 8.—Girl. Fourteen years. Third and fifth grades.

Family and Personal History.—Parents moral, though ignorant. Home dirty and disorderly. The youngest in the family. Older sisters somewhat retarded.

School Record.—Attendance irregular, partly on account of frequent illness. Reads intelligently and has made fair progress in geography and language. Does not seem able to advance beyond third grade work in arithmetic.

Characteristics.—Well-behaved, diffident. Indifferent memory and very poor ability to reason.

CASE 9.—Boy. Ten years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—No marked defect in his immediate family. Circumstances fair, but family are bleeders and refuse operation for adenoids.

School Record.—Attendance fair, but seems to become more and more retarded. At present is making practically no progress. Occasionally restless and very hard to manage.

Characteristics.—Shambling gait. Sullen look. Vicious tendencies. Inclined to pick on younger children. Very cruel to animals.

CASE 10.—Boy. Ten years. Primary grade.

Family and Personal History.—Immediate family shows no other cases of marked defect. Father steady and of average in-

telligence. Mother slightly defective, though a fair housekeeper. Ordinary home comforts in a thriving village.

School Record.—Has attended ten months and is still a beginner. Recognizes only a few simple words and counts ten.

Characteristics.—No marked stigmata. Tractable and appears to try, but sees and remembers little. Marked speech defect. Talks only in broken sentences.

CASE 11.—Boy. Thirteen years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—In the main self-respecting, hard-working. Earn a fair living at various kinds of manual labor. None of them has been able to learn anything at school.

School Record.—Is making only slight progress in all branches. Memorizes in a parrot-like fashion, but apparently has no idea back of his words.

Characteristics.—No stigmata. Well-behaved, willing. Attention rather poor and practically without number sense.

CASE 12.—Boy. Eleven years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Father shiftless and from degenerate stock. Mother low-grade imbecile from a family showing many instances of mental defect and insanity. No training in a home lacking the first essentials of decency. Half-fed.

School Record.—Attends with fair regularity and makes some effort, but is unable to advance with other pupils.

Characteristics.—Average size. Careless posture. Dull look. Manner apathetic.

CASE 13.—Boy. Seven years.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of Case 12. Brought up under similar conditions.

School Record.—In school for two months, but taken out because of his refusal to do anything the teacher asked.

Characteristics.—Undersized, and with a dull, vacant look. Stubborn and intractable.

CASE 14.—Girl. Fourteen years. Fifth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side unknown. Father a drayman, sick much of the time, and earns only irregularly. Mother comes from a bad family. No manager.

School Record.—Irregular attendance. Makes no progress when she comes.

Characteristics.—Pretty, vivacious, rather silly in her speech. Her chief interest at present is young men. Giving her family trouble on account of her waywardness.

CASE 15.—Girl. Twelve years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Father a day-laborer belonging to a family showing low mental ability. Mother a slattern; helps out in the support of her family by prostitution. House filthy and disorderly. Children unkempt and in rags.

School Record.—Poor attendance. Fair interest. No special defect, but generally retarded in all branches.

Characteristics.—Pretty, but exceedingly untidy. Inattentive. Only fair memory.

CASE 16.—Girl. Ten years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Sister of Case 15. Similar home conditions.

School Record.—Like her sister, generally retarded.

Characteristics.—Very untidy in her habits and poor memory and attention.

CASE 17.—Boy. Thirteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both sides show mental defect. Father is dead. Mother and brothers work hard on a rented farm, where they despoil the timber and steal. Home very dirty and disorderly.

School Record.—Attends irregularly and makes no progress. Apparently has reached his educational limit.

Characteristics.—Large and strong. Has mentality of a boy of ten.

CASE 18.—Girl. Sixteen years. Sixth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Father hard-working, quarrelsome, sexually loose, and from a very bad strain. Mother formerly a prostitute and has continued her practices since marriage. Home conditions exceedingly vulgar and degrading.

School Record.—Attendance irregular, but seemed able to advance when she cared to try. Little interest except in sex matters.

Characteristics.—Immoral, obscene, source of corruption to the rest of the school.

CASE 19.—Boy. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of Case 18. All conditions similarly deterrent.

School Record.—Did good work in third grade, but apparently has no ability to advance further.

Characteristics.—Rough, obscene, a very bad influence among the other pupils.

CASE 20.—Girl. Fourteen years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both parents from strains showing low mentality. Bare little home on a poor farm; no marked vices.

School Record.—Attendance fairly regular. Is in the fourth grade, but can do little with numbers. For several years now has appeared at a mental standstill.

Characteristics.—Clumsy, large, prominent teeth, and rather dull eyes. Good-natured, willing, and obedient, but has little regard for the truth.

CASE 21.—Boy. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Father a drunkard and has deserted his family. Mother keeps house for her brother-in-law on a stony little farm. Has one brother of the same mental grade, another decidedly better. Family above the condition of actual want, but have few comforts.

School Record.—Attendance irregular. Appears at times to try and makes slight progress. At other times his mind seems a perfect blank.

Characteristics.—Shambling gait, dull, vacant look, slightly deaf. Attention wavers, fickle memory.

CASE 22.—Boy. Fourteen years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Degenerate stock on both sides. Both parents thieves and drunkards. Seven in the family crowded into four tiny rooms. Filth and disorder unspeakable. Insufficient food. Sleeps in day clothing on the floor.

School Record.—Attendance very irregular. No interest or ability to grasp the simplest operations.

Characteristics.—Hulking figure; sullen look; very clumsy movements. Apathetic; inattentive; lazy. Source of physical and moral contamination.

CASE 23.—Boy. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Degenerate stock on both sides. Mother dead; father indolent and a drunkard. Live in squalor in a tumble-down shack. Always unwashed, unkempt, and has scarcely any food except what the neighbors bring him.

School Record.—Attendance poor. Incapable of advancement in any branch.

Characteristics.—Very small for age; pale, listless, apathetic. Harmless type of defective.

CASE 24.—Boy. Sixteen years. No educational attainments.

Family and Personal History.—On the maternal side vagrancy, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness. Father steady worker and sober. Mother feeble-minded and works hard at washing. Home clean. No control of children.

School Record.—Attended only occasionally. Apparently incapable of learning anything.

Characteristics.—Halting movements; large mouth; vacant, staring eyes; apathetic. Epileptic imbecile.

CASE 25.—Boy. Fifteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of Case 24. Family and personal history similar.

School Record.—Never kept in school with any regularity. Attends now only occasionally in the winter.

Characteristics.—Able-bodied, but inattentive. Indifferent. No aptitude for any sort of mental work.



CASE 26.—Girl. Fifteen years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both sides show sex offense. Alcoholism. Shiftlessness. Parents did not marry until forced to do so after this child's birth. Three half-sisters, all illegitimate, very immoral. Home fairly clean and tawdry decorations, but influences bad, talk vulgar and obscene. Frequent neighborhood brawls.

School Record.—Poor in all studies. No interest.

Characteristics.—Fair looking; plausible. Drinks; lies; is obscene; has immoral relations; is a source of corruption.

CASE 27.—Boy. Thirteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Brother of Case 26. Influences similar.

School Record.—Attendance irregular. Poor in all branches.

Characteristics.—Lazy; inattentive; objectionable in speech and habits.

CASE 28.—Boy. Thirteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Comes of strains showing shiftlessness, alcoholism, inability to advance in school. Father earns fair wages. Goes on sprees. Mother careless housekeeper. Indifferent to needs of children. Neighborhood very bad. Brawling, sexual looseness, obscenity.

School Record.—Attended irregularly. Poor in all branches. Truant.

Characteristics.—Is called "Numskull." No interest beyond loafing.

CASE 29.—Boy. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal stock inert; ambitionless. Degenerated through consanguineous marriages. Maternal sex-offending, lawless stock. Father has never worked. Spent his time in litigation over property left to his brothers. Is irascible, lazy, ineffectual. Home clean, but lacking in many necessities. Ten in two little rooms. On a mountain farm remote from neighbors.

School Record.—Frequently kept home. Ability generally low. Cannot concentrate.

Characteristics.—Listless; shuffling gait; slow of speech; slow to observe and remembers little.

CASE 30.—Boy. Thirteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Stock on paternal side degenerated through consanguineous marriages. On mother's side mentality generally low. Ten children. Barest subsistence on a stony, lonely mountain farm.

School Record.—Poor in all branches. Small ability to concentrate or remember.

Characteristics.—Shambling gait; wide mouth; large teeth. Expression somewhat vacant and staring.

CASE 31.—Girl. Eleven years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Sister of Case 30. History, record, and mentality similar to that of her brother.

CASE 32.—Girl. Thirteen years. First grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side unambitious, shiftless, many cousin marriages. Father lazy, pilfering, abuses children. History on maternal side little known. Mother died in childbirth about six years ago. Family drifted about from one mountain cabin to another. Only care is given by a sister three years older than she who neglects and abuses her.

School Record.—Incapable of advance in spite of proper attention on the part of the teacher.

Characteristics.—Weak, timorous, slow, and uncertain in movement. Mentality that of a child of eight.

CASE 33.—Boy. Twelve years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Father's side much defect and inability to get on in the world. Mother's side little known. Parents married very young and separated, mother going to New York, where she is said to be in a woman's reformatory. Father married again and took no responsibility for son. He lives with his grandparents in part of an old barn. Is clothed through the charity of sympathetic neighbors.

School Record.—Attendance fair. Deportment good, but unable to advance in any way.

Characteristics.—Obliging; willing to try, but very little ability along any line.

CASE 34.—Boy. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—On both sides self-respecting. Fair mentality; industrious; prosperous. Mother and father apparently normal. Two younger sisters show ability above the average. Home comfortable and excellent neighborhood.

School Record.—Attends regularly. Is mischievous; inattentive; shows general lack of ability. Apparently has reached educational limit.

Characteristics.—Subnormal in observation, attention, memory. Interests childish. Inclined to indulge in foolish pranks and enjoys playing with little children.

CASE 35.—Girl. Twelve years. First grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both sides from indolent, shiftless stock. Both parents have low mental ability. Two brothers imbecilic. One brother wife deserter. Home isolated mountain farm. Filthy and disorderly in the extreme.

School Record.—Has not attended for two years. Reads a little.

Characteristics.—Weak from attack of appendicitis. Shows symptoms of "heart trouble." Undeveloped mentally and physically.

CASE 36.—Boy. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side shows long line of pilfering, lawless, hard-drinking people. Father no exception. Maternal same stock as preceding case. Mother has worked hard to keep nine children decent, but has had to have county relief. All children kept from school and put out to work young.

School Record.—Poor attendance. Little ability in any branch.

Characteristics.—Large; clumsy; slow; stupid; apathetic.

CASE 37.—Boy. Thirteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Nephew of foregoing. Father works with fair steadiness in a stone quarry. His family show chorea and other forms of nervous trouble. Home shabby, fairly comfortable. Younger brothers and sisters somewhat retarded.

School Record.—Attends quite regularly. Unable to advance in any branch.

Characteristics.—Well developed physically; strong; exceedingly slow of speech. Apparently decidedly subnormal.

CASE 38.—Boy. Ten years. Second and third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal fair stock, showing irresponsibility with indications of mental defect. Mother unknown. An orphan and boarded by the county in a temporary home. Abundance of food, warm clothing, little training.

School Record.—Attendance regular. Reading and memory work fair, doing only second grade work in number and finds it very difficult.

Characteristics.—Obedient; well-behaved; willing.

CASE 39.—Boy. Thirteen years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side shiftless; ne'er-do-well. Low mentality amounting in some cases to imbecility. Maternal side unknown. An orphan and boarded at county expense in a temporary home, where he is well fed and warmly clothed, but has little training.

School Record.—Regular attendance. Work in no respect up to standard.

Characteristics.—Poor in attention, observation, memory. Inclined to be quarrelsome.

CASE 40.—Girl. Fourteen years. Fourth grade.

Family and Personal History.—On the paternal side very bad; paupers; criminals; sex offenders. Father in and out of the county home, with no responsibility for children since the moth-

er's death. Brother at Glen Mills for stealing. Another boarded out by the county. She has been on the county for years. Tried in 15 homes, but always returned for irresponsibility and other faults.

School Record.—Attendance broken. Slight progress for the time spent.

Characteristics.—Slow, inert, dull, undersized. Appears more like a child of ten.

CASE 41.—Boy. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Originally fair stock but during later generations marriage with members of degenerating branches has brought out on paternal side insanity and other nervous disorders. Father a day laborer. Mother unequal to the struggle of caring for family. Three children dead of tuberculosis. Eleven surviving children, nearly all retarded. Family in a condition of absolute want.

School Record.—Attendance irregular. Poor in all branches.

Characteristics.—Physically weak, undernourished, mentally slow, attention and memory poor.

CASE 42.—Boy. Sixteen years. Fifth grade.

Family and Personal History.—Strains on both sides show much intermarriage between sex offenders. Criminalistic stock. Father works with fair industry. Ignorant and shows very limited mental capacity.

School Record.—Attends with fair regularity. Dislikes it. No interest or ambition. Begs to stay out.

Characteristics.—Slouching gait; thick lips; sagging jaw; stupid expression. Exceedingly slow of speech and thought.

CASE 43.—Girl. Eleven years. First grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both parents from very bad stock. Father dead, since which time mother goes about with her three younger children, consorting with rough characters. Sister sexually immoral at fifteen. Child a witness of revolting scenes.

School Record.—Has attended very irregularly. Apparently no ability to learn.

Characteristics.—Flat nose; wide mouth; dull expression. Cannot answer the simplest questions intelligently.

CASE 44.—Boy. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Antecedents little known, because so few of the family are found here. Father has cleared a small patch of woods. Mother shows interest in the poor home, but is ill much of the time. Older and younger brother are somewhat backward.

School Record.—Attendance regular. Reads a little, but without expression. Appears incapable of advance in any study.



Characteristics.—Average size, shambling gait, facial expression rather vacant and dull. Generally defective mentally.

CASE 45.—Boy. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal unknown, since family has few representatives here. Father sober, but little ambition and intelligence. Mother from family showing fair mentality. Not strong and often ill. Tries to keep home and children in order. House a rude structure on a third of a mile from the highroad in the midst of newly cleared land, which supplies only the barest subsistence. Brother at fifteen is up with his grade. Younger brother defective. In the second grade at eleven years.

School Record.—Fair attendance. Appears to try, but apparently has reached his educational limit.

Characteristics.—A large, listless, hulking boy. Facial expression dull. Poor memory. Particularly defective in number work.

CASE 46.—Girl. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Few representatives of this family in this territory. Father ignorant and shiftless, but not markedly defective. Mother fair housekeeper. Home a poorly furnished house and a few stony acres.

School Record.—Attendance good. Child helped by parents. Is able to read, but fails in language work and has not been able to handle anything but the smallest numbers.

Characteristics.—Average size. General appearance fair. Willing; obedient; memory and attention little below the average. Little ability in number.

CASE 47.—Boy. Sixteen years. Second grade.

Family and Personal History.—Both sides from a long line of defectives, showing very small ability to advance in school. Grow up to be petty thieves, drunkards, county charges. Twin brother advanced to the fourth grade at fifteen, and four younger brothers and sisters all greatly retarded.

School Record.—Attended irregularly until the age of fifteen. Never able to do more than read a little and handle the smallest quantities.

Characteristics.—Average size; shambling gait; listless. General mental defect.

CASE 48.—Boy. Nine years. First grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side fair stock, but father extremely alcoholic. Neglects family, who are often in the direst want. Mother comes from long line of defectives. Is neat and tries to care for her family. Is entirely without number sense. Six younger brothers and sisters are all undersized and backward.

School Record.—Has not attended regularly, and at present is kept home because the medical inspector says he needs glasses and the father is unable to provide them. Barely knows a few simple words, and is unable to handle numbers at all.

Characteristics.—Very small, appearing not over six. Timid, shrinking, slightly deaf and short-sighted. Willing and obedient, but shows general mental defect.

CASE 49.—Girl. Twelve years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Paternal side a long line noted for great stature, laziness, and mental dulness. Maternal side unknown, since mother was picked up in a lumber camp and has not lived with the father for many years. Child was cared for by paternal grandmother. Home poor but neat.

School Record.—Attendance fair. Docile and tries, but at present making little progress in any branch.

Characteristics.—Small for her age, but shows no stigmata. Quiet; timid; facial expression immobile. Eyes rather dull. Slow to observe and grasp the meaning of what is presented to her. Memory and reason below the average.

CASE 50.—Girl. Fourteen years. Third grade.

Family and Personal History.—Belongs to a strain showing some industry, though their poor farms and ill-kept homes testify to inability to manage. Large family growing up in unspeakable filth and allowed to be out of school on the slightest pretext. Younger brothers also very deficient. One of twelve years is still in the second and third grades. One of ten is still in the first grade.

School Record.—Attendance very irregular. Memory and attention poor. At times incapable of the simplest arithmetical calculation.

Characteristics.—Shows no physical stigmata. General mental defect.

The foregoing account should demonstrate one fact: That the problem of the defective child looms quite as large for the rural as for the city school. Only here the difficulty is not so easily met. There is no need of rehearsing the disadvantages to the teacher, the defective pupil himself, and the school in general, which even the presence of two or three such children entails. The 50 pupils herein described are scattered through 20 schools. When we remember that the actual number of permanent retardates in this territory is more than three times this number, we can readily see how distressing the conditions in certain schools may become. In at least four schools the number of



retardates is so great that it is impossible to maintain anything like the normal standard of deportment and scholarship for the remaining pupils. Fortunately, many of the schools are small, averaging perhaps 20 pupils. One school, however, which always has a large number of defectives, opened this fall with an enrolment of over 50. Ten pupils were apportioned to other districts, leaving the teacher with more than 40, ten of whom were defective or from two to four years retarded, and a program so full that it allowed an average recitation period of only ten minutes. Such a teacher cannot give the requisite attention to the defective pupil, even were there promise of her being repaid for her effort.

The after-history of these pupils can hardly be a matter of question. With their heritage of mental and moral defect, their handicap of deterrent home conditions, without initiative or ambition, they waste ten years, in which they might have mastered a trade, vainly trying to learn to read and write. Then they go forth to recruit the ranks of the casually employed and the criminal and to become in time the parents of children like themselves.

#### NUMBER OF DEFECTIVES

One of the primary objects of the study was an enumeration of the defectives belonging to the several classes. The following table gives the number occurring under each class, with this exception: no complete census of the merely shiftless and ne'er-do-well was attempted. Were all those to be included here, who without serious physical or mental handicap, nevertheless do not succeed in maintaining themselves in comfort, the totals would have been materially increased. The enumeration for this class includes under caption "Partially Dependent" those adults who exhibit no positive vices and are, therefore, not to be counted with the other classes. Their disabilities range from patent imbecility through the lesser grades of incapacity, which lead them to pilfer, apply for county relief, and accept as much charity as their long-suffering neighbors will offer. All are undesirable citizens of their respective communities. The persons included in the classes which follow are, with slight exception, also in some degree dependent. Accordingly, the class of "alcoholics" does not include those who, though often drinking to excess, are still

able to maintain themselves and their families without public aid.

#### ADULTS

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| Partially dependent.....                            | 152 |     |
| Alcoholic.....                                      | 30  |     |
| Sexually immoral.....                               | 89  |     |
| Criminalistic.....                                  | 22  |     |
| Alcoholic and sexually immoral.....                 | 20  |     |
| Alcoholic and criminalistic.....                    | 15  |     |
| Sexually immoral and criminalistic.....             | 10  |     |
| Alcoholic, sexually immoral, and criminalistic..... | 3   |     |
| Total.....  |     | 341 |

#### CHILDREN (SIXTEEN YEARS AND UNDER)

|   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| Permanently retarded.....                           | 144 |     |
| Permanently retarded—incorrigible.....              | 14  |     |
| Permanently retarded—wayward and sexually immoral.. | 9   |     |
| Total.....  |     | 167 |
|   |     | 508 |

Dividing this grand total of 508 by 16,000, the estimated population for the whole area, we get 3.2 per cent., or an average of 3 defectives for every 100 of the population.

#### MENTAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE DEFECTIVES

No formal tests were applied in determining the native capacity of the persons studied. The amount of time at the disposal of the investigator, as well as the circumstances under which the study was conducted, precluded the use of such psychologic tests, however useful they might have been as confirmatory of other results. The scheme of inquiry included, besides pertinent facts of the individual's family and personal history, a line of questioning which gave information on the following points: (1) His ability to read and write and handle quantities; (2) educational attainments beyond this minimum, judged in relation to his school advantages; (3) common sense, as evidenced by his account of his work, his amusements, his relations to his family and friends; and (4) general intelligence, as evidenced by his discussion of topics of the day, the war, the elections, etc.

Impressions gained in this way were corrected, confirmed by the testimony of his employer, intelligent neighbors, by county officials, social and religious workers. On this evidence adults and children were classed as imbeciles when their educational attainments were practically nil and their ability in practical

work so slight as to serve no useful end. Adults were classed as morons when, although capable of slight advance at school, their after-life showed clearly their need of supervision and control, both for their own protection and for the well-being of others. Children of school age were classed as morons when, although making slight advance in school, they were yet proving incapable of deriving proper benefit from the instruction given there.

The 508 defectives were distributed among these classes as follows:

| ADULTS                             |     |  |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|--|-----|
| Morons.....                        | 311 |  |     |
| Imbeciles.....                     | 30  |  |     |
|                                    |     |  | 341 |
| CHILDREN (SIXTEEN YEARS AND UNDER) |     |  |     |
| Morons.....                        | 139 |  |     |
| Imbeciles.....                     | 28  |  |     |
|                                    |     |  | 167 |
| Total.....                         |     |  | 508 |

## FECUNDITY OF DEFECTIVES AS COMPARED WITH NORMAL WOMEN

The total number of defectives includes 154 women who have borne children. The inquiry resulted in the finding of only two defective women over twenty who had not borne children.

The high fecundity of this type of woman is well known, and here she proved to be no exception to the rule. Of the total number of 45 defectives who have reached the end of the child-bearing period—

|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 3 have borne | 2 children each |
| 2 " "        | 3 " "           |
| 5 " "        | 4 " "           |
| 4 " "        | 5 " "           |
| 9 " "        | 6 " "           |
| 7 " "        | 7 " "           |
| 3 " "        | 8 " "           |
| 1 has        | 9 " "           |
| 3 have       | 10 " "          |
| 4 " "        | 11 " "          |
| 4 " "        | 12 " "          |

This gives an average of 7 children each for these women, a birth-rate which is fully twice that of the normal women of the population. Of the total of 310 children, 62 are dead, 144 are defective,

many of them figuring largely in this report. Of the remaining 104, 10 have gone to other parts of the country and could not be investigated. Four show industry and ambition above the average. The rest are at best indifferent in character, many of them border-line cases, whom a more rigid classification would have included among the defectives.

The birth-rate of 45 normal women, chosen at random from the area of greatest incidence of defect, is 2.9 per cent., or 129 to 45 mothers. The survival ratio for these cases is 2.5 per cent., while the survival ratio for the families of defective mothers is 5.5 per cent., again more than twice that for normal mothers.

The meaning of these figures is unmistakable. Their full import can be realized only when it is remembered that the numerous progeny of this class often exhibit aggravated defect, which leads to marked anti-social conduct. It is to the unrestrained reproduction of the feeble-minded woman that we owe the disproportionate increase of the socially unfit, with their burden of pauperism, delinquency, and crime. Already this burden is almost intolerable. What will it be a few generations hence?

#### VARYING PERCENTAGES OF THE UNFIT

The total number of defectives for the entire territory as determined by this inquiry was 508, and the percentage for the entire population of 16,000, as already given, is 3.2 per cent., an average of 3 defectives to each 100 of population. If, however, we look into the distribution of these defectives, we are at once struck by the astonishing lack of uniformity found in the number in various portions of the area.

In England the Royal Commission found the ratios to vary from 1.1 to 4.54 per 1000 of the population in areas that were considered typical. Recent studies in America have shown a far heavier incidence in certain sections, but no ratios have been given for any of these communities.

In the present study 112 of the total number were found concentrated in two small settlements toward the northern boundary of the area. One of these, which we will know as L— town, is a row of small frame cottages built along a by-road not far from the prosperous village of M—. These cottages, 14 in number, have ill-kept dooryards, and most of them are badly



in need of repair. They harbor a dozen families, which exhibit almost as many kinds of defect.

In one lives a silly, childish young woman who, after much waywardness and a troublous marital experience, has recently married a civil war veteran three times her age. His pension supports them both, but he is by far the more able of the two. In another, a man and woman belonging to two notoriously bad strains have a brood of children who are laggards in school and are being brought up to worthless lives. In a third is a widow who has kept house for a long succession of men. Her scheme is to stay with them until she has all they own, and then to move on to another victim. Her sons are vagrants, her daughter of fifteen already an able helper of her mother. In a fourth is a cantankerous old woman, herself an illegitimate child, who has always been a willing abettor of evil designs of her family. For years one of her daughters cohabited with a man belonging to an otherwise good family. The three daughters, product of this union, are prostitutes, carrying on their trade, sometimes at the county seat or in New York State, always returning here when threatened by arrest and punishment elsewhere. Their mother, after consorting for years with a drunken, shiftless member of her own clan, finally married him and is living farther down the road. Her fourteen-year-old daughter is already following in her footsteps. Next door lives her sister, who has also married and brought into the community a drunken, degenerate son of another family of fairly good repute. He is a braggart and very daring, especially when he has been drinking. He is frequently helpful to his nieces, the aforementioned prostitutes, in their efforts to evade the law. Across from this couple lives a distant connection, who, after a life rivaling that of any of her neighbors in its license and extreme of condition, has lately married a man of fair respectability and settled to his mode of life. She now spends her time heckling her more riotous neighbors. Their differences are frequently dragged into court, where the airing of testimony shocks the sensibilities of all but the most hardened. A little farther along this road is the shanty of the feeble-minded Sara C., already described in these pages. The farm adjacent to this settlement is owned by an old man, who has been hard-working, but is profane, obscene, and filthy in personal habits. His son, who lives on the place, has had five "wives." It is

doubtful whether he was in every case married to the women. His present wife he brought from a house of ill fame in another part of the county. She has had for years a scandalous intrigue with a neighboring farmer, which is generally known for miles around. Her five children are laggards at school. The eldest, a girl of sixteen, drinks, runs the countryside at night, and has communicated venereal disease to a number of young men in the neighboring village.

This little community is less than a quarter of a mile from a village of about 500 people. The latter is prosperous, law-abiding, has several churches, and a good high school. So far as is known its citizens never interfere in the goings-on at L—— town. When its frequent turmoil and rioting reach their ears, they close the windows and, shrugging their shoulders, say, "It is only L—— town broken loose again." They regard it much as one would the barking of a dog or the screams of an obstreperous child, over which one had no authority.

The other settlement is considerably larger, comprising several parallel roads, with diagonal intersecting cross-roads, the former merging into the streets of the county seat. Many of the houses here make some claim to pretentiousness. Most of them, however, have been long since abandoned by their owners. Although externally an occasional application of paint saves the general appearance, inside, the torn, discolored paper, fallen plaster, and sagging floors testify to general neglect and decay. This is the home of many belonging to the Fale-Anwal clan, to be described in the following pages. They crowd to the number of three or four families under a single roof, and thus reduce the small rental. This community, too, is the scene of many brawls and much rioting. Many of its couples have lived together for years without the formality of marriage. Some of its women carry on the business of prostitution.

It differs from L—— town chiefly in that local agencies have been at work for years for relief of the situation. It has a two-roomed grade school, but since the compulsory school law is not in force, large numbers of children spend much of the school day in the streets. There is a little chapel, where Sunday-school is maintained regularly and a church service occasionally. For years the Salvation Army has been active here. In spite of this, however, conditions are said to have grown worse instead



of better. The better families get away as soon as may be, and their place is always taken by somebody worse.

L—— town has a population of 52, 30 of whom must be classed as defective, giving a percentage of 57.7 per cent. Of the 308 inhabitants of the larger settlement, which we shall know as M—— town, 82 must be classed as defective, and this takes no account of miscreants, which it often harbors for one cause or another. This gives a ratio of 26.6 per cent.

If, now, we take the portion of our territory adjacent to these

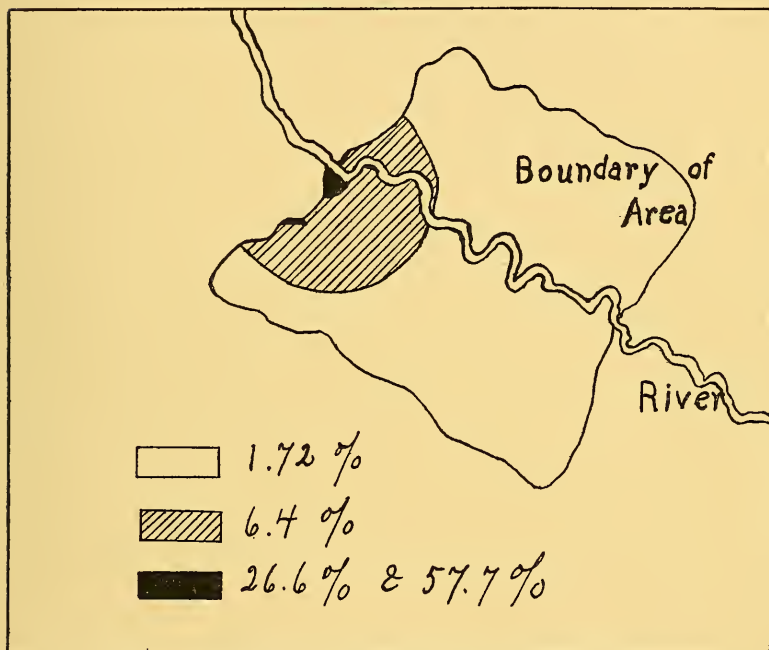


FIG. 1.—GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF DEFECTIVES.

two communities, an area which roughly describes a half-circle, with a radius extending eight miles from the larger settlement as a center, we find it to have 174 defectives. Its population being 2730, gives a percentage of 6.4 per cent. The remainder of the territory, having a population estimated at 12,910, has a total of 222 defectives and a percentage of 1.72 per cent. This variation in distribution is graphically represented in the accompanying figure (Figure 1). Certain sections, accordingly, have four times

as many defectives as others, while certain smaller zones have from 16 to 34 times as many defectives as the number generally found throughout the territory. What is the cause of these wide differences in distribution?

Causes Which Contribute to the Varying Percentages.—The area just described as showing a ratio of 6.4 per cent. defectives is the original home of the Vennams and of the Fale-Anwals, two extensive connections which will be described in the following section. It is also the place of settlement of two other strains, whose members have largely intermarried with the foregoing, and of a fourth strain, characterized by epilepsy and imbecility. It, too, has largely intermarried with other defective families in the same section. These degenerate stocks, planted here six generations ago, have, by interbreeding, continued their defects, and to-day are represented by hundreds of the socially unfit as well as by several times that number on the border-line of inefficiency. This element has kept itself comparatively distinct from the other elements of the population, but all too frequently it has drawn in the weaker members of an otherwise normal family. In the majority of cases where this has occurred it has been a woman of the defective stock who has attracted a man of better family. Since she was usually sexually immoral and her consort alcoholic, the family which was founded through this union remained on the lower level, and thus increased the number of the unfit instead of bettering conditions in any way.

The concentration at L—— town, which gives us the highest percentage, can be traced to the natural attraction of like natures, helped out by certain local conditions. Twenty-five years ago it bore an entirely different character. There was a small factory near by, and these cottages were put up as a speculation and sold to its operatives on the instalment plan. Later the factory was absorbed by a larger plant in another town. The people scattered, and rentals fell to a point where the ne'er-do-well could afford the houses as a shelter. They rent now for \$2 and \$3 a month. The owner naturally is willing to get what little he can on his original investment, and the settlement has been allowed to descend to its present level. Its moral menace is undoubtedly felt, especially as concerns the young men of the neighboring village, but thus far public sentiment has not been sufficiently aroused to interfere.

The first defectives were drawn to M—— town by a manufactory which called for crude labor. The concentration was helped by an adverse sentiment, which drove out some of the worst elements in communities near by which had formerly been lumber camps. The movement thus started resulted in the driving away of the decent families who had made this their home. Rents fell, thus attracting more degenerates, the factory failed, its more enterprising operatives sought employment and homes elsewhere, leaving the ineffectual and unambitious to continue an existence as best they might. The friendly and always available county aid was practically at their doors, as were also the saloons, where they might obtain their favorite beverage, slightly diluted raw alcohol. So naturally they stayed and drew in many others of their kind.

Such a center once established grows not only by the drawing together of representatives of equally bad strains, but by its attraction for the weaker members of better families. It offers them a refuge where their immoral tendencies suffer no check and where their children are certain to have similar lives.

This settlement furnishes many illustrations of this process, of which we will give the following:

Two daughters of a sexually immoral woman of L—— town consorted with men whose families were distinctly above them. They drew the men to their own level, and now their children are leading immoral lives like themselves, either here or just over the State's boundary.

One of the daughters of Maria F., the murderess, illustrates the same process. She married first the shiftless, tuberculous son of a good family. Although defective, she was hard-working and faithful to him. She cared for him so well that upon his death his younger brother, also tuberculous and with a criminal record, allowed her to care for him in the same way. Their children have not risen to the position of the parents and sisters of the woman's consort, but have remained on her level, and now have married men belonging to her strain.

Not only does such a center draw by additions of the character just described, but it sends its aggressors in evil out to become centers of contamination in other places. Many members of these families are adversely known to social workers and county officials in other portions of the State, as well as across the State

line in New York. It is the testimony of a man who for years has been active for the reclamation of these people that there is no circle at the county-seat so exclusive and no corner of the county so remote that it has not suffered from their pernicious influence. A settlement of this character once well started on its course defies every accepted means of regeneration. When we add to the potential degeneracy of the bad blood unsanitary home conditions, a prevailing low moral tone in the home and without, we have an array of conditions for which nothing but drastic action can hope to accomplish any permanent cure.

### THE COST TO SOCIETY

No accurate estimate can be made of the cost of this unfortunate class to the public at large. Naturally, no account can be taken of their numerous pilferings, depredations, or their use of the hard-earned wealth of the self-supporting part of the population. Their ignorance and vice have led to their being badly affected with rheumatism, tuberculosis, all forms of venereal disease, and various other complaints. Physicians attend them for the most part without pay. Probation officers and church visitors give much time and effort gratuitously in a vain effort to help them. Their drink bill is enormous. Every holiday and Saturday night sees many of them intoxicated, and extra police duty is required to keep them from harming other people. All these and many other items are incalculable and must be left out of account in estimating the economic drain of this class on society.

What their presence has entailed in actual money expended for their maintenance and correction may be gathered from the following estimate. This is based on figures furnished by the commissioner's office of the county where the heaviest incidence of defectives falls and gives the cost of these defectives to this county alone during the past twenty-five years:

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| Outdoor relief.....  | \$20,000         |
| Care of orphans.....   | 30,000           |
| Criminal cases coming to the commissioner's office for<br>payment..... | 75,000           |
| Criminal cases settled in court.....                                   | 15,000           |
| Maintenance in county home.....  | 125,000          |
| Total.....   | <u>\$265,000</u> |

Could this sum have been applied to the segregation of its



feeble-minded women, it would have sufficed to rid the county of the whole of its younger generation of undesirables. We must bear in mind, however, that at present the State has no institution for the care of such women, nor as yet has it made adequate provision for an institution of this class. The training-schools for the feeble-minded are overcrowded and have long waiting lists, so that, granted a public sentiment sufficiently enlightened to demand custodial care for the defective woman, we have to face the fact that no matter how dire her plight, there is actually no place where she may be sent to insure such care.

Our short-sighted policy of outdoor relief and county care has not even the merit of being inexpensive. It costs a great deal in money and then serves only to aggravate the evils which it is designed to cure. The people of this county have had no choice in the matter. Every winter sees these freezing, half-starved creatures crowding the almshouse to its capacity or coming by scores to the commissioner's office to beg for a lift over the cold season. There has been no alternative to letting them freeze and starve save in this outworn system. The county has done the best it could with the means at hand. Surely it is high time that the State inaugurate a more intelligent and far-reaching policy which shall forever rid these sections of their unequal and undeserved burden.

### UNDERLYING CAUSES

All the causes productive of social unfitness can be grouped under two heads: First, those which inhere in the individual as the result of a morbid heredity; second, those constituting an environment inimical to the proper development of the individual.

We make no pretense of analyzing all the conditions comprised under these two heads, even for this particular situation, and it is perhaps futile even to attempt to strike a balance between the two classes of factors involved. As already pointed out, in considering the distribution of defectives, whenever several such families are associated, many environal factors are necessarily present to emphasize their unfortunate tendencies. The physical environment, the remoter social conditions, the economic opportunity, are here surprisingly uniform, but in spite of this the handicap of the home environment is frequently great enough to offset all these. To be brought up to habits of indolence and

an attitude of dependence and in an atmosphere which encourages all their worst impulses—these are conditions which might well daunt the normally equipped. With the defective, they spell certain disaster.

In the following account there is no wish to stress heredity as the only factor in this situation. There would hardly seem to be question, however, that of all possible factors, that of a morbid heredity is easily the predominating one.

Hereditary Factors.—When we inspect the list of 508 defectives with reference to the number of families which they represent, we find that they occur in 194 out of a possible 3000 families living in this territory. This gives an average of three defectives per family, even though we leave out of account the large number of border-line cases found there.

This tendency of defect to run in certain families is brought into even stronger relief when we note how rarely a solitary defective is found in a family of normal individuals. Although a constant lookout was kept, only three such cases occurred in the whole area. The first is that of a midgrade imbecile of fourteen, who is unable to advance in school beyond the merest rudiments. He prefers to play with little children and is constantly indulging in senseless pranks. His father and mother stand high in the community, and he has two sisters who are above the average in ability. The second is an epileptic imbecile of twenty. He was never sent to school, and can do only the simplest errands. He is carefully looked after by his parents, who are prosperous farmers. His brother and sister are successful—the one as a teacher, the other in practical work. The third is an idio-imbecile of ten years, also the son of well-to-do farmers. He can speak a few words very indistinctly, is constantly active, grunting, gritting his teeth, turning in a circle. Has occasional violent spells. He is the youngest of a family of five. His brother and sisters all attended high school and are able in various lines of work. All three of these imbeciles have so far been kept from harmful conduct by unremitting care on the part of their relatives.

The tendency of defect to follow blood lines is further emphasized by the following observation: If we select the 10 family names which for generations have been notorious throughout this section for good-for-nothingness, hard drinking, criminality,



and sex offense, and then study our list of 508 defectives, we find that 312 of these, or more than 60 per cent., belong to these ten strains. Further pedigree studies would probably increase this percentage, since our list includes a number of defectives whose antecedents for various reasons could not be definitely ascertained.

The foregoing histories, too, point unmistakably to the potency of heredity as an underlying cause in this situation. In the brief accounts which follow some new proof is adduced, while the larger pedigrees give new instances and also show how many of the individuals whose histories have already been given are bound together in a ramification of vitiated blood lines extending through many generations.

Chart A\* illustrates the inheritance of lack of sex control. It is now known that if a person showing poor sex inhibition marries a person of normal control, half the children will tend to show this defect, while if both parents have poor control, all the children will tend to show the same defect. In this case the mother<sup>2</sup> came from a family exhibiting much sex offense, and was wild and unprincipled as a girl. She had, by an unknown man, a son,<sup>8</sup> now a fine-looking young fellow of twenty-six. Seven years ago he was in court on a bastardy charge, of which he was convicted. He later married a feeble-minded girl<sup>10</sup> whom he had previously seduced. He has since deserted her. Since her marriage to a prosperous farmer, his mother has apparently not left the path of rectitude. Of the three children from this marriage, the eldest daughter at eighteen is the mother of an illegitimate child.

Chart B† illustrates the accentuation of defect through a cousin marriage. We will call this the Depue family. The father of Joseph Depue<sup>5</sup> and the mother of Joseph's wife<sup>6</sup> were brother and sister, and bear a name which stands for nervous defect in other sections of the State. They and their children are the only representatives of the family in the territory studied. Joseph was a good workman when he chose to be, but drank hard and almost constantly, and was very abusive to his family. His wife was indolent, though amiable, and incapable of caring for her family in any way. They came to S—— a dozen years ago, since which time their destitution, the unspeakable condition of filth, abuse,

\* The figures refer to individuals on the charts.

† See pages 49-52 inclusive.

and moral laxness under which they live, have been a sore problem to the community.

The youngest<sup>24</sup> of their 12 children had cleft-palate and did not live. The next older<sup>23</sup> was a cripple who never walked, and died at three. All the four grown daughters are very defective mentally; three are deaf and imbecilic, and three have had children born out of wedlock. Two of them<sup>7, 11</sup> are now married to men as lacking as they are, and have growing families of children. Of the sons, only one,<sup>14</sup> a young man of twenty-four, is steady and works hard to keep the family from absolute want. The father died last year. The mother has become bedridden from rheumatism. Her feet are bent back, and it is six years since she has raised a hand to her head. She lives with the five younger children and her bastard granddaughter in part of a rickety store building; sits smiling all day long on an old rope bedstead, the only care she has being what her deaf, imbecile daughter<sup>16</sup> can give her. Bed and clothing are black with filth and covered with vermin. One daughter<sup>9</sup> has been sent to a State hospital and there is no question but that the rest of the family should be cared for in an institution. So far, however, they have resisted and outwitted every effort to have them committed.

In the next family, illustrated by Chart C,\* the mother is of low mentality and addicted to morphine. The father is slow, ambitionless, dishonest. All the family are neuropathic or mentally defective, and irresponsible in their relations to their fellows. Two daughters have married into the L. family, so notorious for vagrancy and shiftlessness. One of them<sup>9</sup> is now separated from her husband and leads a useless, inert existence at home. The other<sup>15</sup> is the mother of five children. She sits about nerveless, leaving them ragged, dirty, to go to school or not as they please. The sons lead an aimless existence, drifting about, working occasionally, stealing when they have an opportunity. Most of them, too, are said to be victims of the morphine habit.

Chart D\* illustrates graphically a small portion of a considerable network that has barely subsisted for generations in an out-of-the-way portion of the county. They live on little patches of half-cleared land, which they have not the wit or ambition to extend or improve to the condition of a farm. The older generation are all feeble-minded. All the present generation are feeble-minded, indolent, good-for-nothing. Three<sup>11, 13, 22</sup> are imbeciles of

\* See pages 49-52 inclusive.

Explanation of Symbols for Charts A to F, which follow.

- A** = Alcoholic.  
**B** = Backward.  
**C** = Institutional Care.  
**Cr** = Criminalistic.  
**D** = Deaf.  
**E** = Epileptic.  
**F** = Feeble-minded. } Omitted in many cases where other traits  
**H** = Hardworking. } indicate the feeble-minded conditions.  
**I** = Imbecile. }  
**P** = Permanently retarded. } Used of children to indicate de-  
**Q** = Quarrelsome. } fective condition above grade  
**R** = Out-door Relief. } of imbecile.  
**S** = Sexually Immoral. }  
**Sh** = Shiftless.  
**W** = Vagrant, wandering disposition.  
† = Died young.

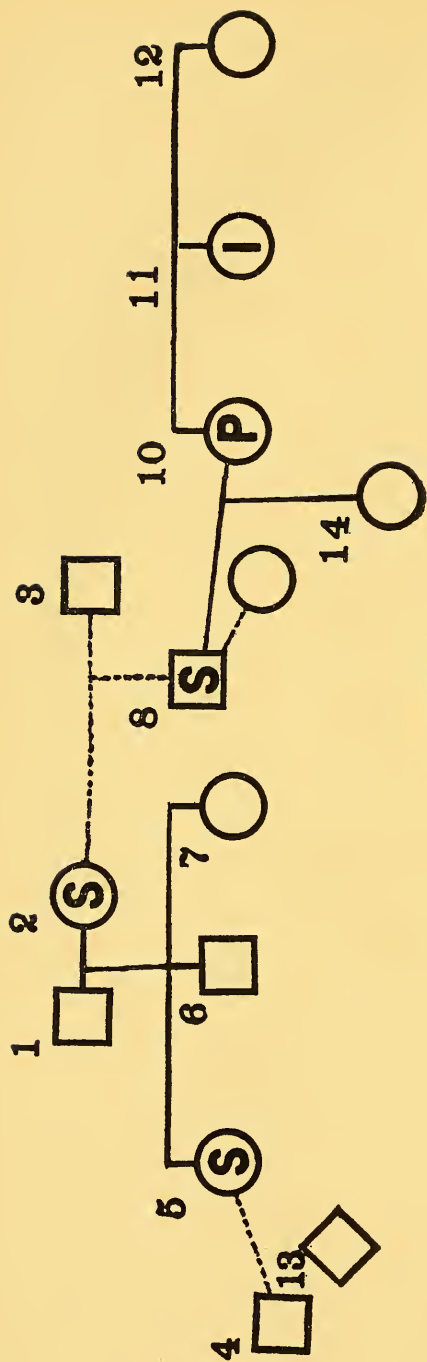


CHART A

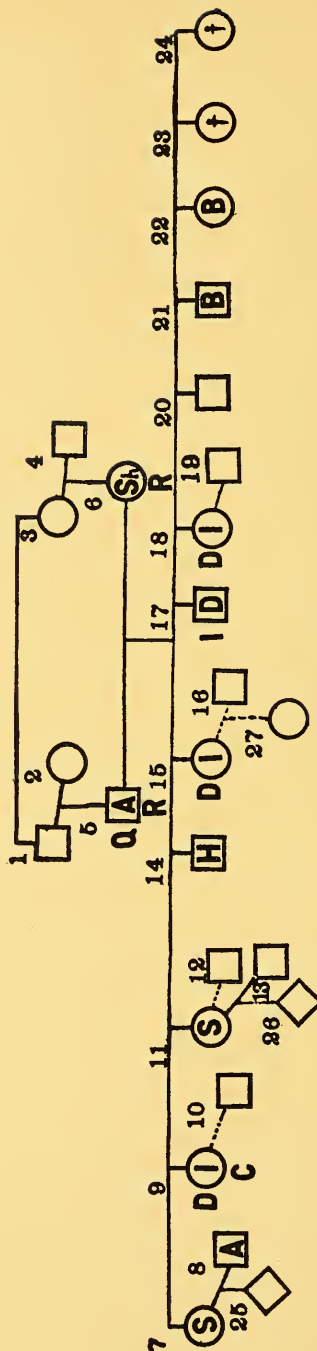


CHART B

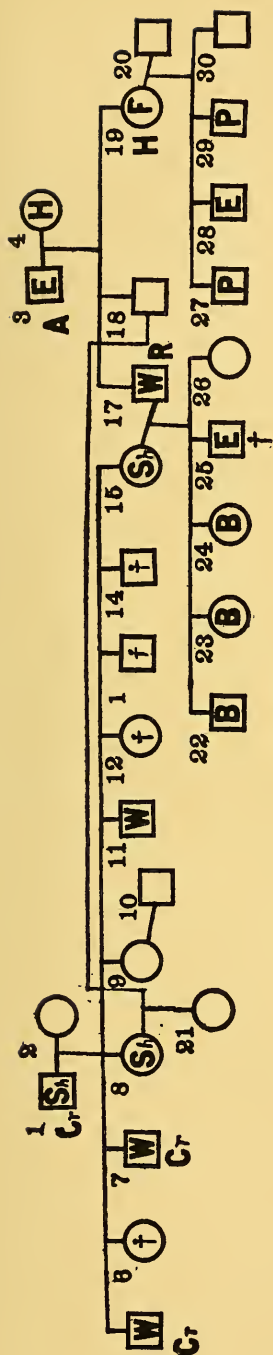


CHART C

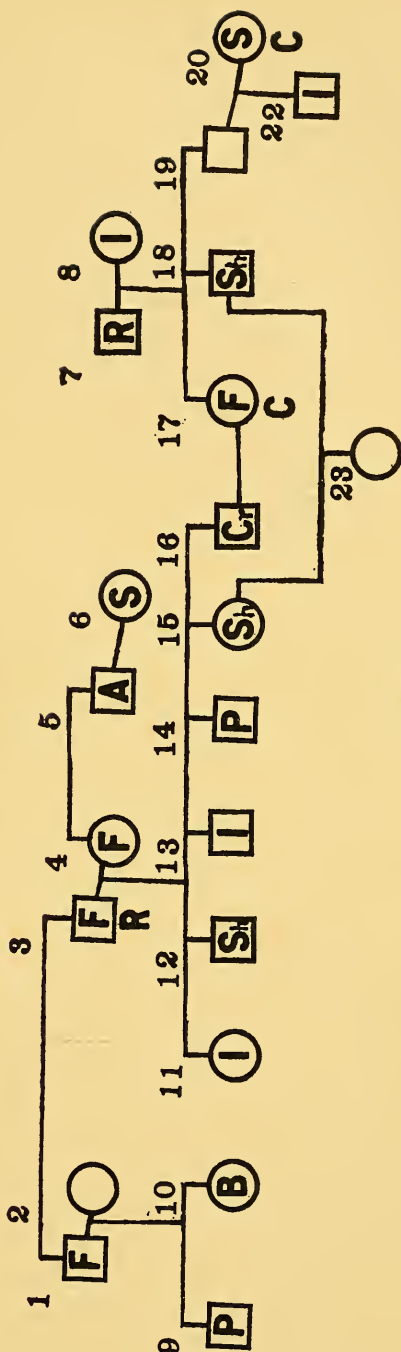


CHART D

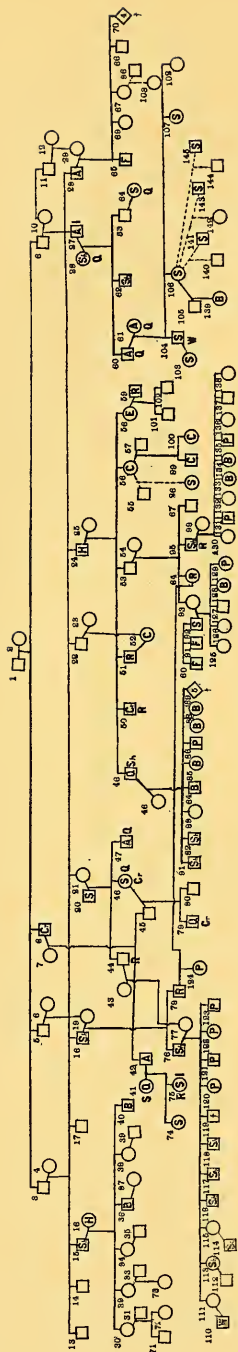


CHART E

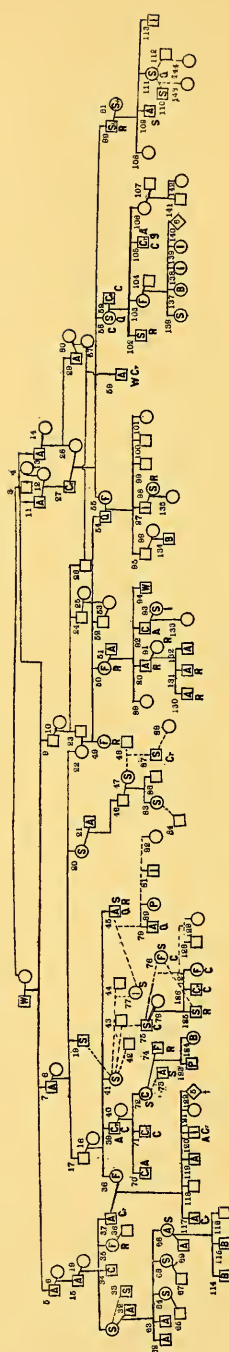


CHART F



a midgrade type, capable of no useful work. A fourth<sup>16</sup> married an ailing, defective woman,<sup>17</sup> and when she became seriously ill, deserted her. She is now cared for at the County Home. The younger children are sent to school very little, so that what small ability they have remains undeveloped. All are growing up as irresponsible and shiftless as their parents.

Another network, and a very large one, whose name is synonymous with many kinds of defect, we will call the Vennam family. It is said to grow worse with every generation, and is represented here by dozens of families, hardly one of whom can lay claim to independence. Many, too, are decidedly vicious. A small part of this network is represented by Chart E.\*

The first Vennam<sup>1</sup> came to the county at the end of the eighteenth century. With the help of his sons he cleared a large tract, and when he died the holdings of several of his sons amounted to 500 acres. To-day there is scarcely a man of the name who owns a decent farm. Many are day laborers and need to have their scanty earnings helped out by county relief and the charity of the kind neighbors who now own the land which their grandfather cleared. They also figure largely in the criminal record, usually for sex offense, larceny, and disturbing the peace. Certain branches of the family suffer from nervous breakdown, epilepsy, insanity, and senile decay.

It is said that the sons of the first settler could not read nor write, but had considerable mechanical skill. Their lack of education may not have argued serious mental defect in a day when schools were few. However, it is certain that they made marriages only with families which to-day show many defectives. Since that time many first- and second-cousin marriages have occurred in most branches, which have, no doubt, served to accentuate many traits. With increasing incompetence they have more and more been crowded up the mountain-side or into mean tenements in the near-by county-seat.

As an example of one of the best of this family we may take that of Lou Vennam,<sup>15</sup> who has settled on a poor little remnant of the land bequeathed by his grandfather. At sixty-five he describes himself as "heart worn out and all broke down with nervous trouble." Trembling hands and panting breath at the slightest exertion testify to the truth of his complaining.

\* See pages 49-52 inclusive.

Two<sup>13,14</sup> brothers died of tuberculosis and one<sup>17</sup> of softening of the brain. He is married to a nervous, energetic woman<sup>16</sup> of better family. They pride themselves on keeping away from the rest of their clan, and so far none of their children has made cousin marriages. Two of the sons are backward and ambitionless. The daughters are better, several having taught school and later made fair marriages. All, so far as could be learned, are managing to maintain their independence, though on a relatively low plane of comfort and efficiency.

Turning now to other branches, we find three families of this name at the top of the highest mountain in this section, where they lead an existence as gray and as bare as the lichens which cling to the rocks. On the little patches of meager soil their small energies cultivate scanty crops of beans and potatoes, which are altogether inadequate for their families' needs. One family lived for years in a little sod shelter. There, 13 children were born to the mother. Now a rude shanty has been placed in front of this, with a loft reached by a ladder, which serves as general bed-room. The indolent, irascible father<sup>49</sup> spends his time in law suits over the land which he says was unfairly left to his brothers. He collects the small wages of his sons for the support of the younger children.

All three families are large. The children <sup>(79-89)</sup> <sup>(110-123)</sup> <sup>(130-138)</sup> total 27, and with one exception make up the little school there. Their chief defect is an utter lack of ambition. To the north and east of the "mountain" there is a prosperous Irish-American settlement, and here, for the greater part of the year, work is plentiful. Farmers say, however, it is next to impossible to get any of the Vennams to do a day's work, or if they do consent to work, they have so little energy as to be of small account. The general verdict is, "They would rather starve on their mountain than turn an honest day's work, or when the work's all done and the supply of potatoes and beans runs low, they come begging for something to do, knowing that we'll see they don't die of starvation." One instinctively wonders where they will all find mates, for experience indicates they will be sure to do so. Four of the older girls have already married into families well known for their lazy, vagrant manner of life.

In illustration of still more serious defects which occur in this family we will take the descendants of another of the sons of the

original Vennam. As you follow a road from the little settlement of B—— you pass a group of shanties and probably overlook them as being too mean for human occupancy, but one of them is the home of old Bose Vennam,<sup>27</sup> the only surviving grandson of the first Vennam, who lives here with his wife and unmarried son. They live in the utmost squalor. The only decent piece of furniture visible is a cook stove. Dirty, ragged garments hang on the walls or lie around on the floor, which is apparently never swept. Swarms of flies are everywhere, especially on the table, where a month-old newspaper serves as table-cloth and the unwashed dishes do duty from meal to meal. What little mind Bose once had is quite gone. He should be cared for as a child, but is not. Consequently, he is as objectionable as can be. He can only mumble a few words and do silly things. When he becomes violent or runs half-clothed into the road, his son and his scolding, hard-faced wife lock him in the stable for the ensuing day or night.

This son<sup>62</sup> is an odd character. He is able to read and write a little and sometimes drive a hard bargain. He owns a hundred acres of cheap, unimproved land, but he rarely does a day's work. He keeps a few half-starved cows and a span of decrepit horses in a tumble-down shed. Frequently the neighbors have to interfere to have them properly fed and cared for. Whatever cultivation the land receives is done by his brother Justus.<sup>63</sup> The latter, too, is very ignorant, but is fairly industrious. He married about a year ago a daughter of a notorious clan, to be described later. She is avoided by all her neighbors, and is known as a termagant, though she keeps her house and her children clean. In her frequent altercations with her husband tin pans and kettles, chairs, and other furniture follow his retreat out-of-doors. She recounts her mixed marital experiences thus, leaving out various interludes of promiscuity: "Yes, I was married to H. This is his child. I couldn't get along with him, and when I found he hadn't had a divorce from his first wife, that showed I wasn't married to him. I up and left him and married J. We didn't get along either. He was easy and let his brothers coax him up to New York State; so then I married Justus."

The case of the third and eldest brother<sup>60</sup> is even worse and has already been alluded to in preceding pages. He and his wife are quarrelsome, alcoholic, ne'er-do-well. They, too, live on an unimproved mountain farm. All that is attempted here in the

matter of cultivation is done by the youngest daughter, who, since last spring, has been away owing to a violent quarrel with her father. The two other daughters and the son are sexually immoral. The eldest daughter has had four children by as many men. She spent last winter with a young man belonging to good family at the home of the notorious Betsy B., and in the spring the young man was called to court on a bastardy charge. The case was settled for \$200.

This section is found to be the home of another socially degenerate group, which we may designate as the Fale-Anwals or the Wal Tribe, a portion of which is shown on Chart F.\* The progenitors of this group came to the State at the close of the eighteenth century. They were Jason Anwal, a good-natured Dutchman, belonging to a family which in other States takes high rank for professional success. He had been cast off by them because of his marriage with Molly Fale, a half-breed Oneida Indian. With this couple came two brothers of Molly, whose wives were either half-breed or degenerate whites. The descendants of these three couples have intermarried and amalgamated with a strain of Black Portuguese and the lowest white element of this section. To-day the connection numbers hundreds of individuals, and wherever it is found is a synonym for low mentality, alcoholism, licentiousness, and deeds of violence.

The whole group is characterized by inability to advance in school. Many of them never learn to read, write, or handle figures. Others advance to the third or fourth grade, where they are tolerated until released from compulsory attendance, and then lead a hand-to-mouth existence at any rough work which comes to hand. So generally is their deficiency recognized that the fact that one member of the tribe once finished the eighth grade and qualified as a district school teacher is regarded with general wonder. The other noteworthy exception to the general rule for the clan is a man who has gone to another State and become a skilled artisan and there supports his family in comfort. Many of the women are potent factors in the spread of venereal disease. Physicians state that practically all who belong to this connection suffer from it in some form. It has been a great cause of mortality among them, and although much of their promiscuity occurs among themselves, there are, nevertheless, a

\* See pages 49-52 inclusive.



considerable number of women who cross the State line into New York or lead periodically the lives of prostitutes in other cities of this State.

No detailed analysis of this racial mixture has been attempted. It is doubtful whether reliable results would repay the effort, since in many branches the sex promiscuity which has prevailed from the first makes it practically impossible to follow with certainty the pedigree lines. There appears, however, to have been little blending of racial characteristics. A few of the clan are almost uniformly fair, with nothing to suggest the Indian in figure or physiognomy. They are thrifty, sometimes to the point of parsimony, good-natured, open, and fairly honest. Such branches have considerable pride in not marrying into lines which show marked Indian character. One of their number, on being asked by a dark-skinned Fale what the Indians he had seen on a reservation were like, reports himself as answering, "Go home and look at your own wife and then you will see," adding with pride, "We don't have any one like that in our family." In other branches the straight hair, coppery color, high cheek-bones, and thin lips predominate. They are sometimes fine physical specimens, but lazy, thieving, irresponsible. Many show, too, the extreme taciturnity, vindictiveness, and cruelty usually associated with the Indian nature. Here there is often a similar pride in being free from the strain of negro blood. They boast: "We ain't none of them blue niggers," by which they mean a type comparatively rare, with full, dark eyes, blunt features, hair which may be curly or wavy, and dark skin deepening to bluish black around the lips. These are also lazy, ambitionless, and occasionally ferocious. This distribution of traits would indicate that mental and moral qualities are somehow linked together with certain physical characteristics.

With the exception of a number of self-respecting families who, by industry and thrift, have succeeded in paying for farms, this whole group may be denominated as socially unfit. How largely its representatives have figured in appeals for charity and in the discipline of the courts may be gathered from the following facts: The name Anwal occurs 190 times in the county records of outdoor relief of the past ten years. This means an average of 19 families in each year. In the same record the name Fale occurs 70 times. In the criminal docket of the past twenty-five years



we find the name Anwal 127 times, and the name Fale 95 times. These offenses are largely disturbing the peace, assault and battery, larceny, and keeping disorderly house, though cases of murder and arson are not lacking.

We may take up its history at any point and follow it whither we will. Everywhere it presents the same story of dependence, often amounting to destitution, flagrant disregard of convention, and deeds of cruelty and violence; all this in a section where others find it possible to live blameless lives can argue nothing but an appalling defectiveness.

Let us begin their story with one of the first families visited. This is the family of old Danny Anwal.<sup>37</sup> The house, which is a decent frame structure, would make a respectable appearance but for the accumulation of barrels, boxes, and worn-out farm implements, which litter the yard. Inside it has the usual lack of anything but the merest household necessities, but is quite clean and sightly, for Damy,<sup>38</sup> the wife, shows a disposition to make the best of matters. Danny has since died, and when visited was suffering from so many complaints that he rarely did more than hobble from a couch to a chair in the front door. His talk, though slightly inarticulate, had a certain picturesqueness, lent it by frequent repetition and a sing-song utterance. When asked where he had served in the Civil War he replied, "Go way, go way, go way off." Then, by dint of hard thinking, he recollected a few names which, however, had little meaning for him. His enlistment as a soldier was undoubtedly the best thing he ever did. He never learned to read or write, though he had an appreciable idea of number. He established his claim to a pension, and though he once bought a small piece of ground, his fitful efforts and lack of all plan or purpose in cultivating it brought in nothing but a crop of debts. He and his sons have figured in many suits, chiefly for assault and battery and thieving.

Damy, his patient, solemn-visaged wife, is his second cousin, and explains how it was natural to marry "'lotion 'cause they all lived together in the same State" (meaning township). She has a fondness for ornament. Her wrinkled neck is hung with beads, locketts and chains, and there is a frill of lace in the neck of her soiled calico dress. In her mournful voice she relates how most of her 11 or 12 children (she doesn't remember whether it was 11 or 12) lived to run about and then just died. She couldn't

tell what "ailed" them. The only daughter to grow to womanhood died in her middle twenties of a "decline." A son,<sup>119</sup> who inherited his father's big frame and bragging ways and early became a hard drinker, was murdered, they say, by a rival clique, because he always came out first in a wrestling bout. Of the three living sons, one<sup>118</sup> is sober and hard-working, though inclined to hoard his small savings and let the family suffer. The second<sup>117</sup> has had an operation for cancer, leaving him unable to work. He is also a great drunkard. His wife has deserted him and there are no children. The third son<sup>120</sup> is an imbecile, cannot talk plainly, drags himself about on the stumps of legs which were burned off to the knees as he lay in a drunken stupor. Truly a melancholy family, but one which at present carries no particular menace, since there are no children to carry on the line of degeneracy and defect.

Not so harmless are the next of kin in this family. Danny's sister is married to one of the few honest, industrious Anwals. They own a little frame house which is furnished with some comfort and kept clean. He drinks, but only occasionally has he had to answer in court for his conduct. His wife has been loose in her relationships, and for a year lived with a neighbor. All three daughters have been prostitutes, the youngest, with her husband, being notorious for their drunken sprees, already described.

Damy's fraternity have all been notorious in one way or another. One<sup>39</sup> deserted from the Union Army, and until his death was noted for violence, debauchery, frequent resisting of officers of the law, and breaking prison. His sons and daughter shared his character and reputation. A sister<sup>41</sup> of Damy lived as the wife of her uncle. Her son<sup>75</sup> has been good-for-nothing all his life. He alternated between the almshouse and a vagrant existence with various women. When tired of the responsibility, he turned them adrift and gave the children into the charge of the county. Two of the latter, who are very defective, have been for years boarded at county expense. They have been placed in homes repeatedly, but always returned for incapacity and thieving propensities. A third is now at Glen Mills. Some years ago the father stole a young feeble-minded woman<sup>78</sup> from the County Home, and after the birth of three children turned her over to his eldest son, with whom she now lives as his wife. Another daughter<sup>77</sup> of Damy's sister has lived for years as the wife of

her uncle,<sup>45</sup> Damy's brother Jess. She is very feeble-minded, cannot talk plainly, has no idea of number or of the management of their little place. Her eldest son<sup>79</sup> is like his father, an habitual drunkard, ignorant, idle, violent. Her imbecile daughter<sup>52</sup> has married at fifteen the youngest son of Maria F. She is silly and wayward, and does nothing but run the country roads. Her six-year-old brother<sup>81</sup> is imbecilic.

And so the story goes. The characteristics of many others in the network may be gathered from the chart, which shows only a small portion of the connection. Here belong, too, Wesley A., Maria F., Betsy B., Katie F., and the wife of Charles D., 62 of the defectives in the schools and most of the inhabitants of L—— and M—— towns. Follow it as far as we may, everywhere its story is one of derelictions which make it a burden to the community, or lawlessness which brings still worse consequences.

Could we eliminate this and the Vennam network from the territory, it would reduce the total of defectives by 221. Dividing 287, the number remaining, by 16,000, the total population, we should get 1.8 per cent. as a percentage for the whole territory. In other words, the unrestrained propagation of these two networks in a small portion of the area has practically doubled the proportion for the whole territory. Surely, no more convincing argument could be asked for the importance to the State of the discovery and stamping out of its defective and degenerate strains.

Had these people been left to themselves or in any real sense been isolated from the better elements of the population, important contributing causes to their unfitness might be sought in their environment. So far as the region in general is concerned, it presents surprising uniformity of external condition. The families who have been established here for years manage to get on only by strict application to the business in hand, which in most cases is farming. During the last sixty years a good many sturdy Irish, Welsh, and German immigrants have gone into unreclaimed sections and hewn out of the primitive forest excellent farms with all modern improvements. They have their churches, their grange, their children in the high schools. Meanwhile, this concentration of degenerates has been taking place, not in an isolated corner of the territory, but on the very outskirts of the county-seat, and more than this, these degenerate stocks have sent out their representatives to form an entire ward of the

county-seat and to found a segregated section in the shadow of one of its largest churches. No means yet employed by the good people of the city have availed to check the growth of this degenerate element. Generous private relief, the maintenance of a chapel and of special classes, constant efforts of the Salvation Army, discipline of the courts, and the work of the commissioners—all these means have not proved remedial in any permanent sense. In many cases they have produced the unexpected effect of aggravating the situation. The root of the evil lies not primarily in the external conditions, which the good people of the community have been trying to alleviate to the best of their ability, but in the inherently defective individual. The lightening of stress and struggle has only made it easier for him to live on, procreate, and multiply his kind.

### SUGGESTED REMEDIES

There are, then, no local means which can be successfully applied for the cure of such a situation as is outlined here. No one is more fully convinced of the futility of such means than those who have tried them and have failed. The sentiment of the better element throughout the section is strongly in favor of State interference, and there has even been agitation for the establishment of a local colony for the segregation of this particular clan. No sensible person to-day questions the State's authority to cleanse a polluted water-supply or take any measures deemed necessary to stop the spread of disease in a community. Why should it not exercise the same jurisdiction with regard to these plague spots, the sources of moral contagion?

State interference may be conceived as assuming two forms: First, supervision of marriage by an effective marriage law; second, segregation or sterilization of the unfit classes. As for the first, State supervision of marriage can do little to prevent the mating of the mentally and morally irresponsible. Too often they dispense entirely with the formality of marriage. What is needed is legislation securing the custodial care of all who have demonstrated their mental incapacity and moral irresponsibility. Under the present commitment act the initial steps toward commitment of defectives rest with the parents or guardian, and they are usually the last persons capable of deciding what is good for their children or the community at large.



There is crying need for a new commitment act, providing for the systematic investigation of the chronically dependent or delinquent, and their commitment to appropriate institutions.

Such organized effort to rid the State of its most pernicious elements need not prove a great financial burden. A person who has wit enough to be a nuisance because of his thieving or scheming to get along without work can usually, with a little supervision, work enough to maintain himself. There are still forests to be felled, and stump lands to be cleared, where the crude energy of the men could be successfully applied. There is plenty of routine work at which the women would be self-supporting. The simple needs of these people would require a relatively inexpensive type of building and equipment.

Most of them would consider it a blessing to escape from the burden of bearing and rearing children. Said a young feeble-minded woman, the mother of seven, as she pulled back the covers from her latest born, twins six weeks old: "What do you think the Lord sent these to me for?" The visitor forbore comment on the inscrutable ways of Providence. She might have explained that the fault lay with the social order which allowed this poor woman to marry at all. She is not so much the victim of adverse circumstances as she is the victim of an intelligent citizenship which knows the certain end of such neglect, the misery for her and the multiplied defect in her progeny, and yet allows the evil to continue.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The facts brought out by this study may be summarized thus:

I. Preliminary survey in Northeastern Pennsylvania reveals at least six areas which may be regarded as centers of degeneracy and defect—

1. They furnish a disproportionate number of court and charitable cases and thus unduly sap the resources of the normal population.
2. They constitute sources of physical decay and moral contamination, which threaten the soundness of the whole social fabric.

II. Intensive study of a restricted area gave the following results:

1. No section of the territory is entirely free from defectives



excepting a narrow zone along its northeastern boundary which is the home of the descendants of Irish, Welsh and German immigrants of a generation ago.

2. There is great irregularity in the distribution of these defectives. The percentages vary from 1.72 per cent. throughout the greater part of this territory to 26.6 per cent. and 57.7 per cent. in certain zones, which may be denominated centers of degeneracy and defect.
3. The heavy incidence of degenerates is primarily due to the unrestrained propagation of two notoriously defective networks, which have flourished here for more than a century. With these eliminated, the ratio becomes 1.8 per cent. for the whole area.
4. Practically all the matings are with degenerate stock, the only exception being when a marriage occurs with a weak member of a better family on the border-line of deficiency. The resulting family is always below the standard of the better family, thus giving little hope of regeneration through this means.
5. The fecundity of the defective woman was found to be twice that of the normal woman in the same area. This high birth-rate is not offset by greater mortality among the defectives, since the survival ratio in this instance is also found to be twice that of children of normal families.
6. The centers of defectiveness have flourished where remedial agencies have been most active for the betterment of external conditions.
7. Conditions in the centers of degeneracy are growing worse. They are the despair of all who have attempted local means of remedy. They call for State interference, which would prevent marriage into the bad strains and secure to their worst representatives permanent institutional care.

These results suggest further the following general conclusions: For the effective handling of the problem of the feeble-minded in this State there should be—

1. Location of its worst centers of degeneracy and defect.
2. Study of local conditions at these centers, which shall secure registration of notoriously bad strains.
3. Prohibitive legislation in the form of an effective marriage law, which shall restrain from marrying into such strains.
4. Legislation which shall secure commitment to appropriate institutions in cases where a marriage law would fail to check the increase of defectives.











